

# **LIFE AND LETTERS**

**AND THE LONDON MERCURY**

**Vol. 59    OCTOBER 1948    No. 134**

**EDITED BY ROBERT HERRING**

**1/6**

# LIFE AND LETTERS

*continuing The London Mercury  
edited by Robert Herring*

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*American Correspondent: Norman Holmes Pearson*

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# The Quiet Voice

## A Christmas Reminder

Beyond the Battle of Britain many years have marched . . . the tumult and the shouting have faded . . . of the glorious Few some have passed to rest.

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# EDITORIAL

---

*October, 1948*

SADLY, and ironically, typical of our times, the fly-past to mark the anniversary of the Battle of Britain took place on the same day as announcements were made with regard to re-armament and civil defence.

I cannot help feeling, and in no spirit of carping at such needs, that what we want is not defence against an enemy but against ourselves; all of us, in every country. It is appalling, and an accusation, that we can even contemplate another war; and that we can, argues some fault, some frailty or foulness, against which no one, as far as I can see, effectually urges that we defend ourselves.

Look back ten years, and see how we have spent our time since autumn 1938. It is absurd, and should be inconceivable, that having reduced ourselves to a position in which we can hardly afford to live—and I speak of not only England and not only Europe—we should be so morally and mentally bankrupt that we are prepared to go on finding new, crueller, and more costly ways in which to die.

Death now, on the terms in which we envisage it, is no longer only the ending of a personal life, many times multiplied. It is the burning in the pyre, as it were as well, all that goes with life—material standards, moral principles, and structure of civilization. We have, as a whole, sufficient social conscience to see that, to date, our civilization has not been so very—well, civilized. But that is no particular reason to scrap rather than to remodel it. To do that is to create nothing; merely to leave a vacuum, a no-man's-land in which Achilles sulks in his tent, Helen lolls in lascivious languor, and Thersites rails. There are better people to be than any of these—and these, let us note, were brought to their condition by continued war. War destroys not only the bodies of its participants; it destroys, too, the minds of those who follow after. So long as peace is not looked on as an active thing, a bright day of effort and

result, but only as an interval between wars which we cannot help priding ourselves on the ability to stick out—so long will there be no lasting construction, no real creation. And therefore, by corollary, there will be dissatisfaction, thwarting, impotence, until 'any way, for heaven's sake, so I were out of your whispering'.

Moreover, so long as we fail to see beyond one war, into the causes of wars—of which several, I need hardly point out, are at this moment raging—so long will wars continue to be a state's unfailing distraction from unease and disorder at home, as well as a means of arousing them elsewhere. In this respect, it is essential to see the world as a whole, not as a series of separate, unrelated corners. Doubly distressing, therefore, is our comparative inability to keep ourselves adequately informed of world-events, and doubly ironical the shortage of paper, keeping us in semi-ignorance of what goes on abroad and preventing us, at home, from writing, giving form to thought. A prime weapon in the armoury, indeed, is paper—or rather, the absence of it in the lands you seek to subjugate. For if you can prevent a people from reading you have nearly returned them to illiteracy. Of what use to be literate, if there are no letters? With strong conviction, therefore, we, on this journal, enter upon our fourteenth year.

### NEW CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Stig Dagerman is a young Swedish writer, whose work is exciting considerable attention in his country; W. J. Tait is a Shetlander; C. Ambrose Lewis lived in Greece for a number of years up to 1946.

# FIVE UNPUBLISHED LETTERS BY CHESTERFIELD

---

CECIL PRICE

THE five letters printed below were addressed to the Earl of Bute by Chesterfield. He is not here the detached observer of human manners that we know so well but a suppliant, begging help from a reigning favourite. Never seeking place for himself, he was very willing, even eager, to advance the interests of his chaplain and of his son.

His attitude to Bute is very different from that adopted in the celebrated *Character* of that nobleman. There, the writing is judicial in tone, epigrammatic in execution. He praises 'the honour, honesty and good intentions' of the Prime Minister but condemns the rashness mixed with indecision that marked his actions. In the following letters, it is Chesterfield's adroitness rather than his critical skill that is clear. He had certain claims upon Bute's gratitude for acting as arbitrator in the dispute between Pitt and Newcastle in June, 1757. He does not remind his correspondent of that debt. When he refers to his own disabilities and approaching death, he may be trying to touch Bute's heart. When he flatters him, he is certainly using one of the recognized devices of the advocate. But when he pleads for his son, he throws them aside and is the more successful; there is no mistaking the anxiety and deep feeling that overcomes him.

In the year when these letters begin, Chesterfield thought his life was coming to an end. A serious illness had left him in 'a very weak and lingering condition' but such was the real kindness of his nature that even in this state, he felt himself 'obliged to do what good I can, in my narrow domestic sphere, to my fellow creatures.'<sup>1</sup> In this mood, he wrote to the Earl of Bute to solicit a chaplaincy for John Hotham:



My Lord,

Old acquaintances, long friendships, and near allances, though respectable in many cases, are troublesome in others, as they often force one into indiscretions. This your Lordship will with Justice think is my present case, and I own it to be so. Mr Hotham<sup>2</sup> to whom my family is allied by marriage, and still more connected by friendship informs me that the Prince of Wales is going to form his Establishment of Chaplains, and earnestly requested me to recommend a Son<sup>3</sup> of his to be one of that number. That is what I can with a very safe conscience do, in regard to the young man's character, as to life, morals and learning, he having been my own Chaplain ever since he took orders, and since that, Chaplain general to our army in Germany, so that I can answer for it that neither H R.H. nor your Lordship, will ever be ashamed of him. But now what shall I say to your Lord<sup>sh</sup> for the liberty I have taken to trouble you with this application? I have always observed that when one has nothing to say to the purpose, one had best say nothing, I will therefore only assure you that it is impossible to be with more truth and respect than I am

My Lord,

Your Lordship's Most obedient and most  
humble servant

Chesterfield.

Jan: ye 27<sup>th</sup> 1760.

The next letter is undated but it seems probable from the contents that it was written in October, 1760, shortly after George III's accession.<sup>4</sup> I have been unable to discover whether Chesterfield did in fact, go to Bath at this time. He was certainly there from 5th February to 19th March, 1761<sup>5</sup> but the letter can hardly have been written then: at that late date, its compliments would have given more offence than gratification.

My Lord,

As my present very ill state of health makes it absolutely impossible for me to pay my duty in person to the King, as otherwise I certainly should, and would have done, give me leave to have recourse to your Lordship, as to an advocate who I am persuaded will not be disagreeable (*sic*) to his Majesty, and whose protection will, I am sure be very flattering to me. Let me then beg of your

Lordship to assure his Majesty that he has not in his Dominions a more Loyal dutyfull and zealous subject than myself and I am sorry to add, nor a more useless and insignificant, one I have no services to offer him for I can do him none I can only form unavailing wishes for his happyness and glory, and those are upon my word warm and sincere.

May he reign long and gloriously, a truly British King, in the hearts and affections of his Brittish subjects May he enjoy the greatest pleasure which a mind formed like his is capable of feeling, I mean that noble generous pleasure of making Millions happy; and may he late, very late be regretted by his people, as their Ornament, their friend and their Father.

I go to the Bath in two days, from whence in about a month I hope to return so much better at least, as to be able to crawl to Court, and to lay myself at his Majesty's feet

Your Lordship's past indulgence to me, saves you from the excuses, which I should otherwise have made for giving you this trouble, but I should not pardon myself, if I omitted this opportunity of professing the regard and respect, with which I am

Your Lordship's

Most humble and most  
obedient servant  
Chesterfield.

Saturday evening

It is in the third of these letters that Chesterfield allows a personal note, almost of anguish, to creep into his studied sentences. His zeal for Philip Stanhope's welfare had been shown over many years and it had grown with the rebuffs which the young man had received on account of his illegitimacy. The Imperial minister at Brussels had snubbed Dayrolles when he had introduced Stanhope to Prince Charles. A year later, George II had refused to appoint the young man Resident at Venice because of his birth.<sup>6</sup> This worried Chesterfield but he persisted in pressing his son's claims and eventually (1756), the King agreed to Stanhope's appointment as Resident at Hamburg. A little later, he even praised his work.

Chesterfield took care to mention the old King's change of heart when he approached George III (through Bute) to beg a further promotion for Philip:

My Lord.

Is it possible for a Man in my insignificant and inefficient situation to make any Justifiable excuse, for troubling your Lordship, and through you, his Majesty with any application whatsoever? I confess fairly, I think not. It is therefore singly upon your Lordship's friendship to me, and upon his Majesty's goodness to everybody, that I presume to make the following request. I make it with a trembling hand, in doubt whether it may be thought reasonable or not, but at the same time in hopes that if not granted it will be at least forgiven, and the rather as it is the only one, and the last, that ever I can make. The unhappy state of Sr Charles Hotham's health,<sup>7</sup> makes it impossible for him to attend his duty as Groom of the bedchamber to his Majesty, and his sentiments make him as unwilling to receive his Salary without discharging his duty, as your Lordship has known, some time ago; Now my Lord if Mr Stanhope could have the happiness and the honour to succeed him in that employment, it would make him happy, for the many (probably) remaining years of his life, and me so for the few remaining months, or perhaps, only weeks or days of mine.<sup>8</sup> I flatter my self that he would neither be a disgraceful nor a disagreeable (*sic*) servant to his Majesty: he has travelled much, and speaks all the Modern Languages, not excepting the German, as well as his own, with a perfect knowledge of the Ancient ones. I say nothing of his moral qualitys, because that in that respect my testimony ought to go for nothing. I am sensible of one great objection which may be urged against him, I mean his birth, but in Justice and Equity both the shame and guilt, are mine, not his. Besides that the late King, in some degree wiped off that blot, by employing him in a no (*sic*) dishonourable foreign Commission, in which he declared himself satisfied with his services.

I have detained your Lordship already too long, who have many greater and better things to do, I will therefore conclude this trouble with protesting to you, that if you will be so kind as to reccommend (*sic*), and his Majesty so gracious as to grant this request, The King will lay the highest obligation, of duty and gratitude upon a most faithfull and zealous subject, and your Lordship upon one who will never forget the favour, but be to the last day of his life, with the utmost truth, respect, and gratitude

Your Lordship's

most humble and

most obedient servant

Chesterfield.

Friday Oct: 31<sup>9</sup>

I have been unable to discover whether this application succeeded or not. The name of 'Mr. Stanhope' is to be found among the Gentlemen Ushers of the Privy Chamber in the Queen's Household of 1761<sup>10</sup> but this person was Edwyn Francis Stanhope.<sup>11</sup>

A further letter of application shows Chesterfield as assiduous as ever on his son's behalf. The envoy to the Electors of the Rhine, Onslow Burrish, died at Munich on the 22nd January, 1758,<sup>12</sup> and Chesterfield began to make inquiries to see whether Philip might obtain the post. He was told that the vacancy was not to be filled and that, in any case, his son could not be spared from his duties at Hamburg.<sup>13</sup>

This does not appear to have satisfied Chesterfield and, a year later, he asked Newcastle if he could 'get Mr. Stanhope shoved from the rank of ensign at Hamburg to that of second lieutenant among the electors of the Rhine.'<sup>14</sup> Having failed in both attempts, he made a further essay after George III had come to the throne. As the following letter implies, the new monarch showed no prejudice against Stanhope. Chesterfield hoped that if his son could not take Burrish's place, he might be given one of the other appointments mentioned or any other employment that would give him status.

April ye 9th 1761

My Lord.

The letters of a deaf (I had almost said of a dead) man, being rather less troublesome than his company, I chuse, for your Lordship's sake only, to pay my court to you in this manner. Your Lordship's very kind letter to me, and his Majesty's very gracious declarations, upon the subject of Mr Stanhope encourage me to venture this application in his behalf, the only one that in my insignificant situation, I can with decency make.

The report of an approaching peace is now, universal, and I hope in God, not intirely groundless, for I am sure that this, his Majesty's *Native Country* (I am never weary of repeating those words) stands in need of one. This event will open many foreign Commissions, especially in your Lordship's department, which from the nature and situation of the war, could not be filled up during it's (*sic*) continuance. One Mr Onslow Burrish, an obscure man, had the Commission of itinerant Envoy to the Electors of the Rhine and to

the Dyet of Ratisbon, that Commission has been long vacant by his death. The Commission of the Plenipotentiary to Flanders will likewise be open,<sup>15</sup> and perhaps Mr Mitchel<sup>16</sup> may upon the peace, desire to return from Berlin, as his Commission will then be unimportant, and more for form than substance. I mention these several Commissions to your Lordship, not as presuming to chuse any one, but only suggesting them, and submitting wholly to you, whether you may think Mr Stanhope intirely unfitt for any of them or not. Nay so far am I from pretending to point out any one of them, that if it should be easier to your Lordship, and more agreeable to the King to bestow any civil employment whatsoever upon him, I shall be equally happy, and gratefull

Since I am now troubling your Lordship, give me leave to do it a little longer, to congratulate you, upon the present happy situation of this country, and still happier prospect to which, without the least compliment to you, I am sure you have so greatly, and so honestly contributed Parties are now abolished, and the King is King of his united and unanimous people, and enjoys their confidence and Love to such a degree, that were I not as fully convinced as I am, of the virtue of his Majesty's heart, and the moderation of his will, I should tremble for the Liberties of my Country.

I am with the greatest truth and respect imaginable,  
My Lord

Your Lordship's

Most humble and most  
obedient servant  
Chesterfield.

The cynical reader may think that this letter contains two statements that are merely calculated to soften the hearts of Bute and the King. They are the references to his own deafness and to his interest in peace. In point of fact, Chesterfield was never more sincere than when speaking of these. Of his deafness, he complained constantly. Though he had been afflicted with it for thirteen years, it still made him feel stupid and denied him 'the only rational pleasure' he could enjoy—society. His interest in peace, too, was no mere applause of Bute's policy. Throughout his career, Chesterfield had been opposed to belligerence. In November, 1760, he condemned the immense expense and most horrible devastation caused

by the war and urged that if Russia or Saxony could be purchased by a million, 'it would in my opinion be money well laid out.' Six days before writing the fourth letter to the Earl of Bute, he had told Newcastle that he sincerely hoped the terms of peace would be accepted.

The last reference to the liberties of the King's subjects is, however, a little ambiguous and might even have been thought rather impertinent.

George III obviously took it at its surface value for Chesterfield's zeal was well rewarded in 1763. Philip Stanhope was, at last, promoted and became Envoy Extraordinary to the Imperial Diet, receiving his credentials on the 18th March, 1763.<sup>18</sup>

Chesterfield's letter of thanks had been dispatched to Bute a week earlier. It is formal, studied, and contains nothing of the deep personal interest of the preceding letters where the writer, for once, had spoken from the heart.

Friday March 11th 1763

My Lord.

Though your Lordship's manner of obliging your friends and servants, prevents their importunity, it neither will, nor ought to protect you from the trouble of their acknowledgements. Give me leave therefore to return your Lordship my humblest and heartiest thanks for the great favour which the King has been pleased undeservedly to bestow upon Mr Stanhope, and which I am sure, was wholly owing to your Lordship's partial representation of him to his Majesty.

I feel (*sic*) it as I ought to do, and though it cannot add anything to, it will perpetuate, those sentiments of truth and respect with which I have the honour to be

My Lord

Your Lordship's

Most obedient and ,

Most humble servant.

Chesterfield

P.S.

May I beg of your Lordship to lay me at his Majesty's feet, and to say to him for me, and much better than I could for myself, whatever is proper, and most respectfull upon this occasion?

These letters are transcribed from the holograph manuscripts in the Cardiff Public Library (Ms.3.615) and I am indebted to the Librarian for permission to reproduce them.

<sup>1</sup> Bonamy Dobrée, *Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield* (6 vols King's Printers, 1932), p 2360

<sup>2</sup> Beaumont Hotham, afterwards 7th Baronet, died 1771. His brother, Sir Charles Hotham, 5th Baronet, married Chesterfield's sister, Gertrude.

<sup>3</sup> John Hotham, second son of Beaumont Hotham, became Bishop of Ossory in October, 1779 (*Annual Register*, XXII, p 245).

<sup>4</sup> It is docketed October, 1760, in a contemporary hand

<sup>5</sup> Bonamy Dobree, op cit, pp 2373-4.

<sup>6</sup> Bonamy Dobree, op. cit, Introduction, pp 188-190.

<sup>7</sup> Sir Charles Hotham, 6th Baronet, died 1767. He was Beaumont Hotham's nephew.

<sup>8</sup> Ironically enough, Chesterfield lived till 1773 while his son died in 1768.

<sup>9</sup> It is docketed 31st October, 1760, in a contemporary hand.

<sup>10</sup> *Annual Register*, Vol IV, p 215

<sup>11</sup> Edwyn Francis Stanhope's letter of thanks to Bute for this position is also in the Cardiff Collection. It is undated but docketed June, 1761

<sup>12</sup> D. B. Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789* (Camden Society, Third Series, Vol XLVI), p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> Bonamy Dobree, op. cit, p. 2287

<sup>14</sup> Bonamy Dobree, op cit, p 2340.

<sup>15</sup> Diplomatic relations between Flanders and Britain were broken off between 1757 and 1763. Sir James Porter was eventually appointed Minister Plenipotentiary there, arriving 28th October, 1763 (D. B. Horn, op. cit., p 10)

<sup>16</sup> Andrew Mitchell (1708-1771) was appointed envoy to Frederick the Great in 1757 and held the position till his death.

<sup>17</sup> Bonamy Dobree, op cit., pp. 2442 and 2841.

<sup>18</sup> D. B. Horn, op cit., p. 41, *Annual Register*, Vol. VI, p. 127.

# THE MAN WITH THE HAMMER

---

MARGIAD EVANS

JAN ROSÉ told me: 'Stradivari used to go out at night with a hammer and tap the trees.'

He told me no more. There is no more. It is a peasant legend which must belong to the warm mountain slopes immediately north of what is now Italy, where grow the maples, sycamores, and superb straight-tendoned pines which furnished the liutaros with their materials already half prepared by nature.

Peasants repeated this solitary anecdote, until with the fame of the man they became legendary. When Jan Rosé repeated this sentence to me I thought it the single *personal* fact I had ever heard of Antonio Stradivari.

But the information was incorrect. It is another man we can see on the forest path, darkly as by intuition guided. Another man, also a superlative artist, who suffered horribly, who has not been forgotten, walking and meditating with his hands his violins.

One sees him with his hammer and lanthorn, his fingers around the growing trees, his ear pressed close as a fungus to the bark listening to the responsive vibrations which will sing the minds of Mozart and Beethoven.

The Man with the Hammer was the great and suffering Jacob Steiner, perhaps the greatest violin maker outside the Cremona colony of geniuses, who ever existed.

Music, the mathematical solution of infinity, the mighty and endless drama of the subtlest sense! And chiefest of its expressions the strings, human and instrumental, peerless among them the violin! There is no creator of worthy specimens who is not interesting enough for scrutiny let alone so magnificent an artist as Jacob Steiner, the insane, the impoverished, the eccentric, the obstinate; one of humanities' martyrs.



Among liuteros Steiner may be said to be placed as Blake among poets. Each was an isolated and most beautiful artist with a touch of wilful childishness. Blake, however, in his madness (the writer is truly and unfashionably convinced that Blake was literally mad) was accompanied by the stars and the spirits of God, while Steiner perished in a ghastly, convulsive struggle against the cruelty of his circumstances, *alone*. Blake is a cheerful subject for the heart, Steiner a most sad one. Blake mad with angels and great angelic lions, Steiner mad with man and the debt of the world. Nevertheless there is a parallel. They are two innocent souls, innocent that is in the sense that they have remained separate and not mingled their inspiration either for bad or for good, with the determination of others.

It is when genius (imagination) grows on to what is already so original, results obtain such as lead one to think that art alone—not ancient science (magic) nor modern science ('civilization')—is the true employment of universal force; man, as represented by his highest, has interpreted far greater miracles within himself than he has universally. Compared with the acts of imagination, science is childish, religion as mere blind worship, erotic.

That is why the sentence which tells the story of the man with the hammer, seems to me to be not only a pathetic and picturesque legend, but an immense symbol of every creative being, in every century, not one of which is before the other in enlightenment, but all level and all pointing to the ultimate discovery—God Entire.

All the great liuteros contained the elements of great sculptors and great wood-workers. These Donatellos and Grinling Gibbons of musical instruments had but one form it is true—size being the only exact variation—fashioning and re-fashioning the violin-shape as true sculptors and painters are for ever working out that of the human structure. The form of the violin is now specifically recognized as being so perfect that the test and hardship, as with man's body, is to attain it. By artists and connoisseurs of all kinds it is declared to contain and to liberate subtleties of design which *in the one* give to eye, heart and ear, the utmost sensual satisfaction.

A ceaseless incentive and excitement to the artist speaks in the curves around curves, in the coiled scroll, in the whole immense strength and buoyancy of this wooden bubble. For the collector as for the musician, as for the maker, the object is bewitching, one of the cumulative thrusts of skill to be reached in this life.

A great many people are entirely ignorant of the *general* artistry and scientific knowledge possessed by such men as Nicola Amati, Antonio Stradivari, Carlo Bergonzi, and Joseph (Guiseppe?) Guarneri for the discoveries made in the universe of sound by such men as the master liuteros were to music what the discovery of the law of gravitation was to physics. The fact is, the master liuteros had a scientist's knowledge of sound mechanics (density, volume, pitch, control, and speed), a sculptor's strength, delicacy, and precision, a musician's ear, an artist's conception, a poet's ardour and idealization, a cabinet-maker's love of, and wit in, wood. It is true that unlike the painter and the sculptor he had not to embrace within his creation a conscious 'expression' of life; but added to all that I have numbered, he had to place within his violin a voice, and that voice second to none!

The resulting combination was—the violin, the shape of which was conceived almost as it is now, by Gaspo de Salo of Brescia in the sixteenth century. No fresh model for genius has ever been required, for with the exception of few and trifling modifications, it was perfected in the late seventeenth century and has remained so ever since, all innovations being proved total failures.\*

Was ever so instantaneous a masterpiece! Think of the antiquity linked to all others—language, science, medicine, history, prayer!

Finally the liuteros completed this masterpiece with a film of transparent, glowing varnish, the secret of which (if secret it was) has been lost. No part of their art was ever written—it was as if the written word did not exist for them. Personal triumphs in beauty and tone were handed on to sons

\* *Note.*—The period 1700 to 1725 is usually known as 'the golden period' of Stradivari—the perfection of the instrument, his work being unsurpassed, was therefore achieved during these years.

or favourite pupils, and when these failed the stream of grand violins ended for ever.

The Italian masters seem to have led long, unimpassioned, neighbourly, and family lives with no furious events. Rivalry there was, and perhaps not with rancour: disappointment certainly, but the law of the best to the best seems to have been observed—Nicola Amati left his tools not to his family but to Stradivari. Stradivari recognized Carlo Bergonzi as infinitely surpassing his own sons in splendid imagination and execution if not in industry.

Some of the glorious instruments made by these heroes of the Italian saga received in the course of fame, names as mystic, fitting, and beautiful to their own sentient loveliness as the Sword Excalibur. The most amateur amateur has heard of the iridescent *Dolphin* Stradivarius—indeed these violins, violas, and violoncellos were salient in a way their creators never allow themselves to become—like famous jewels they seemed to gather life and renown as they circled in the world. Meanwhile their creators lived quietly on in their lovely Cremona displaying very little of themselves for musical history to repeat. One suspects Joseph Guarneri (del Gesu) of being different, perhaps because of that thick dark cross, like a religious thought which marked his labels, but more from something in his style of conception.

Another great liutaro, not a Cremonese, we know was neither placid nor long-lived—Jacob Steiner himself. He was not an Italian—I suppose he was a Tyrolean if the Tyrol existed in his day. But from wherever he hailed to wherever he died, an extraordinary and exceptional being passed: the lute-descended, pregnant swellings which began the violin with curves like the full blown sails of windjammers, died divinely through the perfect bends of Nicola Amati, and emerged corrected in the male chastity of Stradivari's lines, as the noble master's mind revealed once and for all wherein lay the greatest sonority and beauty of tone: henceforward with the notable exception of Steiner's only, great violins were 'flat' violins. Steiner only did not accept the lesson. One is compelled to ask, why? For there is a terrible point in the question. With his ability he must have been fully aware that

in refusing to adopt Stradivari's discoveries he was raising difficulties in his own way: was he then, as Blake, original to the point of more than eccentricity?

To anyone studying Steiner the question is important. I merely mention it. If the Man with the Hammer were born with a bias towards insanity there is no doubt that the behaviour of mankind towards him and not anything within himself was responsible for its development. Moreover, Steiner's madness as Blake's, was, artistically considered, gloriously successful. But unlike Blake, the physical consequences were tragic.

Jacob Steiner's violins were then a reversion. They were in no sense primitive; his tone was superb, clear, carrying, more individual than anybody else's; and his violins (when he had the material and the prosperity) were exquisitely finished and varnished. Nevertheless a reversion they were, and a sturdy one. They were 'heavy'.

They are extremely rare, extremely valuable, and they have a peculiar crisp, thrilling voice which is known as the 'stinging' Steiner tone, and which it is said makes a lover of these violins a lover of none other. And this stinging penetrating voice makes them natural soloists; indeed it is claimed for them that in orchestral playing they can be distinguished in the most profound *pp* passages.

These instruments are as beautiful as rare: Steiner used a rose-colour or yellowish varnish and he is known to have made them at times without purfling. Their scarcity is tragedy out of tragedy, pointing to interludes of madness, interludes of prison and poverty, and vindictive debt. Steiner's precious life ended when it was but half as long as it might have been, half as long as other master luthiers. God made Antonio Stradivari live to nearly a century as if he foresaw there was never to be another. He made him live smoothly, he made him wise, calm, industrious, he blessed him as he blessed Joseph and Solomon: but Steiner he made an Esau, a Saul, a sufferer, and as with the tragic king and the tragic shepherd, he put into this Jacob's soul something infinitely grand, wild, and pathetic. Miserable Steiner! So often did mere living interfere with his art, and debt and sorrow and madness try to destroy him, that it is

wonderful those hands which had been choked by chains, those eyes bleached by dungeon darkness, did not fail him and posterity altogether. Instead of which in his reeling existence the 'mistaken' genius produced some of the most vital, interesting, and original violins of all the art. He died destitute, raving, tied to his workman's bench, his wife, children, and friends being all dead. And the dreadful end of this great man and great artist has never ceased to haunt me. How differently lived Stradivari, working peacefully always, under a special benediction of uneventfulness! There is a portrait of him. It is the face of a silent man: the calm dark eyes are full of something inexplicable, the beautiful mouth is curled like a leaf. Great Stradivari was no sleek thinker I am sure, for there is no polish of complacency in the soft, grave, poignant regard. The hands, with pear-shaped palms and pointed distinct fingers, each one a separate entity, are holding a lute. It is in some undefinable way a strange picture, sad, mirror-like—the portrait of a distant, controlled, and subtle man.

When Jan Rosé told me Stradivari was the Man with the Hammer I tried to think of him from this picture, walking in his dark, rich clothes and embroidered collar, on the mountain slopes in the evening, hearing the goatherds playing sweetly, hesitantly, upon their pipes of hemlock; and able to distinguish by its green and tender note the fresh-cut stalk from the seasoned. I imagined that there he might have met as a boy, his pupil and perhaps only equal, the wondrous, careless Carlo Bergonzi. A man in black, a middle-aged man, a prosperous and wealthy citizen of lovely and respectable Cremona, he was to be respected, greeted wherever he chose to walk.

But the man was another. One, the scenery of whose presence brought fear. One, who having suffered from his kind, was to be avoided by them. Sallow, scarred, poor, terrible, Jacob Steiner strides to the woods.

## II

'Of music and of Beauty's power . . . ' *Old Song*

The shape then, has been conceived; the art will develop to it. To avoid the impediment, Steiner sounds the tree for the

knot Nature has tied in the growth. With his small, wise implement as a physician will dot the patient's chest with tapping finger tips, he touches, within the dimensions of the living tissues, Paganini's hands, Mozart's mind. Who, in turn, will touch others in the apostolic succession of art. . . .

Sixty years ago, deep in the night, in a small country town in Poland, a little boy of ten was playing his violin.

He was Jan Rosé. His home was a wooden house, crowded and hot and limpid still with light left over from the summer day. The shutters were open and the heat of the sun was cooling in the boards. Father, mother, and elder brother were sleeping. A soft, mild odour seeped indoors where the boy stood with the sweat on him, like the scent of a ripe orchard where the wasps are sucking the pears and plums that have tumbled in the grass. The sleepers, undisturbed by his practising, lay creaking on the floor above him. They did not hear the music: it was part of their life and livelihood.

The boy had to keep stopping to wipe his blurred eyes with his bow arm. The passage was a difficult one and the playing was exhausting him, for even in his dreamy whirl he sensed a fault. The frail room jarred: his white awake face, and white unchildish hands had a look of anguish. He was a little creature, except for those premature hands, with a small body and low wide shoulders.

Suddenly there was a knocking on the shutter.

'C natural. You're playing C sharp.'

Jan repeated the passage: 'Yes.'

'Good night.' And the footsteps passed on. Music never sleeps. Never anyway in that little Polish town when children were trained to it as to the ballet.

'It was my master. I was never out of his hearing,' Jan Rosé said. He was fond of this story: music was everywhere with him, and it was his first language.

One day the blacksmith of our next village had told me of a sick violinist who was living in obscurity in a lonely bungalow. His wife made gloves and worked in an aircraft factory. The violinist, the smith added, had played at the court of the King of Russia.

I took my violin. Jan Rosé was sitting in a wicker chair

staring out of his window at a pear tree covered with blossom. A bow lay across his knees. He looked at me and I looked at him and I just said: 'I can't play. Let me hear the voice of my violin.' He turned his face away. Later he told me what that moment had been to him.

'I can't play either. I am paralysed.'

After a moment he looked at me again. His face was old and white and worn—it had a great ledge of underlip and was full of pain *and* laughter. A beautiful dear smile he had.

'You must learn. I will teach you. Please take up your violin. Now . . .'

So it began. Jan Rosé, Mamma Rosie, myself, and the two violins—the Amati and my Dutch one which Jan loved and which we named Jacob, after Steiner. The lessons. The talks. The talks which broadened into lessons, and the lessons which became thoughts. Sometimes Jan brooded and would neither speak nor teach. There was great grief in that room. Then Mamma Rosie would make tea with lemon and afterwards, perhaps, Jan's dumb hands would waken and begin to stir against the strings. He began to think he might get better, might one day play with me.

'I am so lazy,' he said.

'Certainly you don't do a thing,' smiled mamma. She was beautiful and patient. She sat snipping fur with her head on one side, looking as if she were listening to someone practising beyond a door. I never saw her even after Jan's death without that look.

I used to cycle over most Sundays, my fiddle case swinging from the handlebars. It was summer: the bungalow stood in a stony lane, in the fields, very very quiet and solitary in the sunlight. The dog would race round me and bark, mamma would smile out of the doorway and presently I was in that hot strange little room, my heart beating, the violin in my arms.

Even now, two years after his death, I can hardly write of it. I feel I don't know *how*. I have had no other such experience. For me it was as though I were continually overhearing some deep, deep music. I was rapturous to learn, miserable at the ignorance of my hands which were far behind my instinct. And something was happening to me which had never

happened before—someone was taking possession of my being. To Jan Rosé I was my hands. He wanted them. He said so. They were marvellous, he said, perfect, the hands of a violinist: 'Look, mamma, look, how she holds it. Oh.'

'They're very *big*,' said mamma laughing. She was making some gardening gloves to save the marvellous hands from some of the scratches Jan deplored. I myself used to stare at them going home—at their warts, broken nails, and general ingrained usefulness. It was *incredible* and yet it was happening.

'I will make you forget everything. You will want to play all day. You will forget the gardening and the bees and the writing,' said Jan: 'Your life will be to play.'

If he had lived he might have made me so. I had adored the violin ever since I was a small child and begged for the little one, the smallest of all in the shop window where they hung like rows of kippers. The fact that I had not been allowed to have it or to learn to play, seemed no longer unhappy, now that he was teaching me, but a fortunate oversight. I was intensely *over* happy, overcome with bliss at this sudden sharing of a dormant passion. I had never met anyone who was interested even in the violin, much less a person who loved it, in all ways, as Jan did. I had guessed a world and it existed.

'How do you know so much? Eh. Tell me?'

'It's because I love it.'

'Silly. You talk like a fool Yanka, the little Russian boy I shall call you. It is John Bull you know—the Russian John Bull. Rosie! Make some tea. Silly Yanka. Let's have some tea.'

But all the time I was listening and learning—for Jan Rosé was a wonderful speaker—I was subconsciously struggling against too strong a power. I feared something—oblivion—obliteration? But unknown to us Jan was dying. Did he know? Did he know he was dreaming and I was the dream? There were times when he would speak of his return to public life. The Albert Hall. 'And it will be *your* violin I shall play.'

He told me wonderful stories. Anecdotes, the history and traditions of the beloved violin, the work, the humour of a musician's career, the eccentricities of artistes, poured from him. He seemed, in those few months of life that were left,



to gather up the essence of himself and spend it. Then again he was silent: there was nothing, not even breath left.

In this way I heard of Tarisio, the greatest expert and collector who ever lived—Tarisio the peasant carpenter with his sack of priceless treasures, tramping the map of Europe, sailing on the storms, clasping in his arms, the Spanish Bass. I read too: I read Tartini's immortal letter of instruction on technique. When I quoted it to Jan he had never heard of it. The reading of music was far more natural to him than the reading of print, and most of his stories had either been experienced or had come to him orally.

What was most deeply impressed on me was to what tenderness and understanding music affected poor and simple people. People who could not play, who were not educated in any sense, were moved by the man who was a musician to the most profound compassion and humanity. For Rosé had suffered and been denied, and been without money. Success had come neither soon nor easily: but music brought help from some—what one might call 'simple' people, that is folk-people, unvitiated, who have made so much of it that is so good—a young waitress, for instance, in Berlin, who found quiet rooms, and a job for him when as a youth of fifteen with only a five pound capital, he went to study under Joachim. 'How good she was,' he said, 'she was as good as a tender elder sister to me. She mended my clothes, she watched over me. For years we wrote to each other. Oh, what has happened to the German people; they were *good*.'

Then one night when mamma was at the factory, he woke up ill, breathless, and cried out with terror at the feeling in his chest. There was nobody he thought, nobody, for the bungalow was very isolated, but he was heard. A party of gipsies came in. There was a woman with them. She bathed his head and breast with cold water. Rosé watched them when he felt better, as if they were his dream. They sat on the floor and with a fork the men ate a pot of chutney that was on the table. Then they went away silently like Indians. Thinking mamma might not believe they had been, for they touched nothing else, Jan showed her the empty jar with the fork sticking in it.

'There! You don't think I would eat a pound of chutney in the night, do you Rosie?'

'Of course I believe you. Why, Jan never makes things up,' cried mamma to me. Indeed, we both believed him—the gipsies were probably poaching for trout, neither was it the first time I had heard of their gentleness when help was wanted.

He spoke more often of his father and his mamma, and Samuel, his dead brother. I had grown some fine strawberries that year and I took some to him. He was so pleased. He ate them slowly and that afternoon he sang songs in Russian to me—peasant songs about harvesting in a low and somehow *choral* chant. It was a beautiful soft voice that sounded as if it had many vocal chords his speech was almost English but his singing was foreign through and through.

I can never see red strawberries without wishing I could take them to him. From illness and unuse his hands were opaque I can never see a violin without creating in my mind, at the same time, flat, white fingers lying against it. For hours he would sit and caress the Amati. . . . It was late summer: children were gipsying in the stooks: it was chill and hot in a breath, and mamma Rosie threw logs on the fire where there was a blue enamel saucepan full of coffee with spent matches floating. The logs smouldered in heavy smoke: Jan coughed, and mamma thought he was beginning to suffer from asthma. If he had lived I think I should have died of feeling. There were hours when it was as if a soul, not a living being was talking. It makes me tremble even now though it's over and can never happen again. In a sort of dazzle, near tears, in a passion of interest more intense to undergo than love itself, I listened. And I couldn't show it. He was too ill to bear intensity. Overwrought those last months were, but the rest of life is underwrought.

I used to get up and go and sit outside for a few moments. My heart *had* to pause. I would go down the wooden steps and draw off a canful of rain water for mamma. Everything looked most strange to me. The old, old stitchwork pattern of harvest, the brown pale fields smocked with stooks, the long seeding grass growing over the roots of my feet, the hedge, the whirl of the trout weir, made the *wrong landscape*. He had

thrown a peculiarity over my own countryside I was becoming an extension of Jan—of his memory, *his* childhood. My hands . . . after all it would not be described exactly in terms of landscape, and yet it seemed to me the young farm horse going by was a horse from Jan's boyhood—a *Polish* horse.

Then I would go in again. He began to speak, with his eyes very wide open, of the mysteries of *tone*, which is the same as the essence of life in our bodies, no one knowing how it enters. Then he said suddenly: 'Art is private'

He brooded: 'Yes, it is so with all real artists. Entirely private. And it *will* exist. As for me I have been too proud. I wrestled with the Public. But Jacob fought an angel. I tell you, Yanka, the only man an artist may safely attempt to outshine, is himself.' (I knew he was thinking of Ysaye and Paganini, whom after the fashion of a violinist, he worshipped, though God was his only God.)

'Effort is only—good?—yes, good—if it's pitched against the Absolute, and not against anyone else's achievements.'

'But it mustn't be the words,' he cried, rocking the Amati in his arms.

I asked him what he meant. Usually he spoke easily but it took him a long while to get this out.

'In life' (said Jan slowly), 'in music I like there to be something beyond me—something I cannot understand. Something very wonderful that is outside and all around my limit. Don't you want that in poetry, Yanka?'

'Yes. That is poetry I think.'

'But yes! And music and faith too! But it mustn't be the mere *words* you see? The words must have a meaning you can understand—and another promised meaning beyond what they say—e-e-h? That is what is wrong with a lot of writing and music now. It is the—the—sounds and the words that bewilder—and yet there is no mystery attached to them. In all that we see—the grass—the hills, even the great buildings—I feel it. Yet I see them plainly—I understand what I see. They are there, simple, lovely, like my Amati. But because I understand how they are speaking to me it does not follow that I can get to the bottom of them. I do not wish to. In a song, my dear, it must not be the words that are bewildering.

I hate muddle! One must learn the grammar of music. You see? *it must not be the words,*' he repeated energetically, 'that is why I want you to play, Yanka.'

I thought I understood him. And I felt a vague unrest about him. Up till then Jan had shown the healthy self-centredness of the living master. it was for *his* sake he emphasized that he wanted to hear me play, to borrow my rare strength, to make my hands his own instruments. But it seemed that was changing. He knew he was leaving me. And we were not nearly—oh anywhere near!—far enough. The beginning was so good I should never want and never find, another master. Better to stop.

One day he held up the Amati to me: 'This violin has killed me.'

He was silent looking at it. And then—

'Some people say you can be both.'

'Both what, Jan?'

'Both a person and an artist. You cannot.'

Mamma Rosie: 'I know that's true.'

Jan: 'She knows everything.'

'Oh, how I wish—I used to grow so tired of it—the scraping and everlasting sound of it—but how I wish now I could hear it again,' mamma cried out. 'Oh, Yanka—they used to stand outside the door—great violinists—just to hear him practising!'

She returned to her sewing.

She had hung up crusts in the pear tree for the little birds. We sat looking at them: it was evening, on the far side of the hedge we could hear a close loud, sweeping noise, like a giant cat washing itself—which was the cows grazing. Jan liked to hear them at night when he lay awake alone, thinking about Paganini's fingers. For Paganini, following an evil custom of his own, had introduced himself in a dream to Jan some years before. I was never told it, but I always fancied that it was after this occurrence Jan left comfort and success, and wrestled with the Angel. Paganini said:

'If you want to play like me you must do as I do.'

He lifted his *del Gesù* and his fingers streamed down the strings like water. It was fearful, Rosé said. Then the dream vanished. He jumped from his bed, and then and there he

began to play: 'Never had I played so. But next day mamma had to poultice my arm before I could appear at my concert. I could hardly lift it. In three days my playing had advanced—oh, unrecognizably I *felt* I was a great violinist. Oh my God—soon after—this began. . . .'

And he touched his paralysed arm to which some faint nervous life was returning. Too late. Within a week or two mamma had to call in the doctor. Rosé was dying. All those months his heart had been dying. He was taken to hospital. It was not asthma, it was cardiac disease. The last afternoon I saw him at home he could hardly speak, but he forced me to have my lesson

'Take up your violin!' And I had to. '*Up bow,*' said Jan, 'your difficulties are nearly over.'

He was mad as an angel that last day.

He died one November night, in the town. I came away in the dark from the news and walked out into the country: dead leaves were lying in the rays of the headlights like shoals of shells after a heavy tide—the rain was long and sad. I could hear him saying to me: '*Up bow,*' but I knew I could not go on without his guidance, and I knew certainly how grieved he was at leaving me unmade. I realized I should never play, and never want another master. When I was home I sat holding my violin in my arms and covered it with tears. I was mourning for Jan in the way he, my teacher, would understand me mourning. For between master and pupil who adore the same instrument is a passionate and enduring and chaste relationship, though one be ignorant and the other dead.

I held my violin Jacob, and looked at it. I wept for it and for Jan. It was a perfectly articulated word, which I should never understand, and he had died unhappy and disregarded by those who should have helped him. Jan Rosé was dead.

'Du bist die ruhr,' I wrote. *Thou* music. My angel, my art, my grief.

That was two years ago.

If I think of him now it is as the little boy in the fruit-smelling, acacia and lime grown little town he made me see so distinctly. The scent of the flowers. The snow, the sound of strings soaring: on a corner someone dancing, someone singing

in an upstairs room, little boys with instrument cases, running to practise with their elderly professors. On all the faces is a look of serious happiness. Young faces, old, kind stern faces, and among them the boy Hubermann's, whom Brahms kissed. Whose kiss, Rosie saw. . . .

Death, like a star, stood over his image.

## III

'Or if in bramble and forgetful moss  
Here my Dum angel yet do hesitate,  
Pursue me faded;  
For I was real.'

*A Country Epitaph.*

The ethereal ear of Jacob Steiner the master must wait for unsullied silence. And so it is evening. Behind the wind which is blowing across the village street, the mountains lie in an Italian light, silent, in planes of golden shadow. Compared with the glowing, blowing, charcoal scented village they are a panorama in a mirror.

The roadway is hard mud. Some young chestnut saplings bent in the wind, in the angle of the rough square, are like brooms left leaning in the corner of an empty room. The women's head-dresses twirl and flap their long ends, half showing the plaited, medallion-like hair, carved like cameos on their necks. Asses and white and piebald goats, picketed are pecking at the grassy step sides. A priest crosses the street holding a vessel softly to his breast and musing out of his eyes, while a whisper snakes down the wayside from door to door. Jacob Steiner, with his great stumbling stride and hooked hands, is coming. . . .

'He's here again. Look. The Man with the Hammer. Yonder he is.'

'Father. . . .'

'Watch him. He's here again.'

He is here again. A woman in a scarlet bodice crosses herself, drawing the veil of God over eyes and heart. A man lifts a child on to his shoulder and slips into an entrance. But the priest glances at this swaying image of a man (emaciated as from rage, not hunger) as it approaches and passes him; it

is a trained look, the Father's, without superstition or tenderness, and no gesture goes from him.

With the terrible alertness of the blind, his right hand grasping handfuls of air, his left holding the small mallet and lanthorn, the huge featured, prison-bloated man with the quivering eyeballs and the vehement, reeling stride dwindles away in the distance until he is no larger than a midday shadow. And then like bees whose hive has been jarred the quick insect faces and sensing, waving feelers crowd the thresholds and the whisper is spoken.

'He was here again'

But Jacob Steiner whom ardent men are to follow and to copy has stridden out of the snake's reach. His feet are knotted round the mountain's bones on the goatherd's paths, that wander like veins on the insteps of the mountains, where Calvary is turned to stone. Upward, with upward growing head, he carries his great secret of listening, to the orchestral forest. To the maples, the sycamores, the spotted birch, and higher still to the pines that ridge line on line, like ships entangled in the sea . . . for this he searches, for that he waits, within himself, within the richness of his hearing, contented—he contented! And in his artist's concentration, blissful and benign!

'Mine is to listen, thine is to sing.'

—for his sure instinct tells him that the essentials of refined sonority dormant but alive and growing in these mountain woods, exist for posterity.

A bell rings in the village valley. It blows yet. Jacob Steiner sits under the branches. He rests, free of anguish, of dull interference, of doom. Perhaps as he listens he thinks of virgin freedom, perhaps of the monks with whom some say he lived for twelve years in peace.

The twinkling bell ceases. He lies back along the ground hearing the creeping of the beetle, the purring of moth's wings, the breathing of the leaves which hold suspended in their mesh of whispers, the great and grand silence of sundown. It's nearly time for soon it will be quite dark, and an hour after dark, will be still.

He stretches full length, his outflung hand playing with the

brittle stalk of a seed shedding hemlock. He thinks, 'God sends me silence,' and mentioning God his thoughts become infinite in a moment, and he, leaping with them into the full un-touchable light of his creativeness, knows: 'I am the interpreter of my soul; and its approbation is all that I need.' Through the dusk he looks at the brown, dry hemlock whose flat pale seeds fall on the back of his hand as he fondles the stalk. This moment is the flower of sight, the star of hearing. 'My heart shines My heart is a star and a flower in the middle of me, that burns, and sees, and hears, and looks at God. It is naked and whole.'

THIS is what I think Jacob Steiner the great Liutaro thought on the mountain, when, not out of indifference but out of joy, he forgot the existence of mankind. He was no longer separate, he was whole with God.

It is mysticism, but it is simple. So simple and natural that it includes every action. At exactly the right moment, he sits up, and squats over the lanthorn, kindling it in the middle of the guttering shadows of the tree trunks. Then, still waiting, he flings himself down once more, the lanthorn lighting the ground, and his hands, loosely clasped, lying in the dish of rays as the hands of a card-player rest upon the table between games. In the high hill darkness no beam of mist twines through the light which is pure and transparent as the balancing air. An hour later, when the star-most leaf is still as the deepest root, he rises and gathers up the lanthorn. His movements are now smooth and hunter-like: he walks with extreme caution lest by the catching of a twig, he wake the trees: softly but firmly he raises his hammer, and taps a trunk, and then his right arm falling as though into a groove on the dark side of his body, he extends his full height against the tree, and fastens his leaning ear to the bark. . . . Tarisio is undreamed, unborn of the unborn, the mind of Beethoven inchoate, but in that moment when man and tree are as one being, enwound one with the other, Time stirs, and tilts the measure, as happened in a Lincolnshire orchard, when another man looked out of a window and saw an apple fall into the grass.



## THE POET AND THE ANGLER

by HUGH MACDIARMID

*'Nor can I doubt what Oyl I must bestow  
To raise my Subject from a ground so low.'*  
Dryden's translation of Virgil's 'Georgics'.

It sud be wi' the guid poet as it is  
Wi' the practised angler wha loves to see  
Trout feedin' seriously and quietly  
Wi' nae heich jumps efter air-borne flies,  
Nae playfu' frisks that can only excite  
The novice.

And gin he sees here and there,  
Cooried laich by the burn as tho' in prayer,  
Floatin' doon like wee ships wi' a' sails set,  
The flies causin' the rise he blesses the sight,  
And gin ane comes close eneuch in to the land  
May weel scoop it up wi' a hollowed hand  
As when frae amidst the dampness the fine weather kyths  
Hesitatin' like a young ear o' corn.

A trig wee insect, fearless on his loof upborne,  
Licht as the thocht o' death in a soond man's heid,  
For water-flies ha'e nae sense o' dreid  
Twa tall veined wings the colour o' thunder clood  
And langer than the segmented jade body  
Like hillsides atour a sma' glen road  
Or yon bipetallous floo'er o' earth and sky  
The horizon hinges. And twa setae  
Wavin' gently in the air, noo sideways,  
Noo up and doon. Syne suddenly  
The critter flutters and tak's flight  
Like the white flash o' a thrown switch  
When a new circuit's formed and the current  
Flows invisibly through anither channel.  
Sae, profitin' by what he's seen he cheenges

To anither waled frae his box the fly on his cast  
 And touches the new ane wi' a drap o' thin, colourless oil  
 —To gar it float—and is ready at last.

But a poet may see perched thus on his hand  
 (Gin scientific accuracy is o' nae mair concern  
 To Poetry than ultimate or absolute truth  
 Is to Religion, since these are attempts  
 At union wi' the infinite no' mainly on the side o' thocht  
 But mainly on the side o' will in the a'e case  
 And Imagination on the ither, and perfectly true ideas  
 Are neither essential for that, nor is it essential  
 To either Religion or Poetry to believe  
 That its ideas are perfectly true)  
 Less a fly than a challenge to gaze  
 On a hieroglyph o' the end o' ane  
 O' the great *αἰῶνες* o' the human race,  
 The queasy glory o' life-and-death—as a man may get  
 Sight in snell air o' his breath, like reek frae a cigarette.  
 Or, allied to nightmare, deem it again  
 Nocht but a vulgar weakness o' the brain,  
 The shairp edge o' madness made starkly plain,  
 The human need to inflict, and suffer, pain.  
 Gaunt, sallow wings, still, stormy, unpredictable,  
 Like a' ither wings the minified wings o' Death's Angel,  
 (Tho' glowered at lang eneuch they can swell to full size)  
 And wi' something in them like the alternation  
 In a poet's nature o' vanity and humility,  
 Delight and desolation,  
 Lust to exhibit and shrinkin' secrecy,  
 Like flashes o' his auld vulgarity  
 In a man that seemed to ha'e been born again.

Study them aince mair afore they flit  
 (This horrid wraith come into your life frae naewhaur,  
 This carrion by-product suddenly becomin'  
 The total o' everything !)  
 And note the brimmin' sense o' life  
 Shot through wi' tragic intimation

## POETRY

That mak's a man in a schizophrenic way  
 See in them as in a greasy mirror  
 His dooble character—spectator and actor tae,  
 Till like Piero di Cosimo he sees a'thing  
*Salvatico* like his ain nature.  
 Or, abjurin' thocht and intuition baith,  
 Wins clear o' a' imagery and achieves  
 The peculiar delight o' the empathetic experience  
 —A love that raxes oot longin'ly  
 Faur ayont the grasp o' knowledge,  
 A love that's no' only a delight  
 But a nostalgia and a desolation . . .

Even in the height o' simmer  
 It's cauld by the waterside,  
 Engagin' no' sic trout as an angler can  
 But naething less than Leviathan.

## GLOSSARY

sic = such	gar = make
a' = all	snell = very cold
sud = should	raxes oot = stretches out
laich = low	ayont = beyond
heich = high	gin = if
kyths = emerges	a'e, ane = one
trig = trim	syne = then
loof = palm of hand	waled = selected
atour = set about	weel = well
coored = crouched	

## PHASE AND FORESHORE

by WILLIAM J. TAIT

Lolls a slopside lubber moon  
Imprecarious on a perch unseen,  
Shored by the vacuous yawn between  
It and the sagging sky's dropscreen.

Hangs a half-wit maudlin mask,  
Dangles a dinted coin, a dusk-  
Splatched lore-lorn hazel husk,  
Shell of rot-radiant robbed mollusc.

Not the premonitory golden bruise,  
Stigmatic stipple on the patient sea's  
Grey pachydermis, can appease  
The eyes' conventional strip-tease;

For still the rat-gnawed goddess casts  
Her blight of beauty, the unfolding coast's  
Spectral gradations, pastel ghosts  
Of hill and headland, bear the impost,

Tax of the blatant beast, more gross  
Infliction on the evening than the gears'  
Reluctant stridence. The road uprears,  
Swings west, and as we crawl transverse

To bale and blasphemy, through the bay's  
Black stencil on a leadfoil sea  
Careers a candent sorcery  
Which dazzles eye and mind, till they,  
Caught unawares, conspire to praise  
Cynthia's eccentric tyranny.

## HOMECOMING

by WILLIAM J. TAIT

And so I came, drawn in the long backward tram  
 with the rhymeless seats strewn among the paper  
 and the shamefaced slats of light:  
 with the pillars coming and the pillars going,  
 going for always to the mist and steam,  
 coming but never gaining:  
 and the steam cold from the engine by the sea  
 and the pillars going forlorn to the cold sea.

Came low-walled  
 with soot flaking from the discoloured sky  
 under black bridges in a twist from the shore;  
 back to the cliffs, Bracque-sky-cliffs, barracks huddling  
 together for danger in the twilight;  
 through clay-hued cañon and cobbled delta,  
 lurch to the last switch, the street.

I, drawn against the sucking undertow—  
     blue-mine-in-the-skull gem  
     urgent shaft of shoulder  
     gold given red and free—  
 by the ration of day, done and not done,  
 swept slovenly the street.

And the sea lived in the sailor in the doorway  
 and the soldier silhouetted in the gleaming pathway of pavement,  
 drawn towards the twin green moons, half-moons hung skew:  
 in the blue mind-laughter of the smile, the wile,  
 in the home of the stream, the over-hearing,  
 in hold unfretful, promise and return.

## POEM IN SICKNESS

by HENRY TREECE

One shall be fellow to the lark's gilt tongue,  
 One shrink, hands to his ears, from thunder.  
 One, pierced by the unicorn of sense,  
 Shall stammer to a deaf god in the dark;  
 While other, finding unique ornament of flesh  
 In nails and rack, fearing no punishment  
 But flat sun's searchlight in the empty heart,  
 Shall seek both far and wide,  
 Even beneath damp stones, for sin,  
 An agony to taste that penitence be real.

These hungers in the mind are incidental.  
 What matters is the progress of the hand  
 To knife, or flower, or to the bowl of salt;  
 Time as a stream, Time building like a cairn  
 Above us, crushing down our hopes  
 With massive masonry of years—  
 It is all one. Mind's hunger is a fiction  
 Whose hand is gnarled by winter to a thorn.

Yet the sad game goes on; the whitening lips  
 Turn back across the mists to find the breast;  
 The shaking hand knows momentary peace  
 In children's writing, or in broken flowers.  
 The weary steps drag on, back to the womb's safe warmth,  
 Back to the cradle before the kitchen fire.

Then at last there comes a sickness in the head,  
 When, here and now forgotten, slaving heart  
 Flogs the slack limbs to leap eternity,  
 To overshoot the moment, grasp at stars.  
 Losing identity, the tired mind  
 Assumes divinity for sake of ease;  
 A troubled god, whose head turns here and there,  
 Starting at mouse's footfall, searching the bed  
 For adders, moving through the world  
 Fearful and restless, like a traveller

Who finds himself in some dark foreign town  
 Of words he knows not. Sheltering,  
 He stands beneath the dripping bridge,  
 Watching the lights in windows, always  
 Hearing his name spoken with a laugh  
 Out of the dusk, in theatre or alley-way;  
 Always sheltering away from rain,  
 Watching for a smile, sick of the sight  
 Of prowling cats and memories of gaiety  
 Whirled through the wilderness of streets.  
 A sickness in the mind, a weeping god  
 Who envies the beggar his slow smile,  
 Or rogue his easy sleep, or laughing child  
 His ecstasy at frog's ungainly leap,  
 Even the calloused hands that crumble bread  
 In simple faith, each meal a sacrament.

Many have come much farther,  
 Knowing infinitely more  
 And faring worse.  
 They who started out with the trumpets  
 Or under the eagles,  
 Even carrying the scallop-shell of peace;  
 Even they, and especially the last, fared worse.  
 For them, the stake, the rack, the excoriation,  
 Or at last the raw bone showing through the flesh.

They knew what it was to suffer,  
 To lie damp of nights, sharing with rats;  
 To go hungry by day and night,  
 Hoping the dogs would fight  
 And so forget the bones.  
 Crawling through torrid days they grasped  
 For fly-blown offals. In the chill  
 Reaches of the night, by the sick riverside,  
 Forgotten of men they read the scraps  
 Of greasy paper that the wind flung down,  
 And felt their dead hearts gasp with joy  
 Or fear, or mild expectancy at month-old news.

Knowing less, we speculated more  
 And so escaped immediate distress in hope.  
 Hoping less, because our minds,  
 Cribbed, cabined and confined,  
 Could show us less,  
 The less we suffered,  
 Less showed the disease than they  
 Who walked in glory, poxed and pitted  
 Till the crow himself took wing towards gentler airs,  
 And let them pass in momentary peace,  
 Noting the path they took, and knowing that  
 Sun and sweet time will sweeten anything;  
 But marking, all the same, the path they took,  
 And scouring sky with calculating eye  
 For any interloping contestant.

There is no going back. Along this road  
 Too many dreams have died, too many feet  
 Have slowed from stride to shamble. In the dust  
 You still may see defeat's drab signature,  
 The crumbling crown, or supplicating hand  
 Like cactus drowning in the callous soil.  
 And in the still of evening, when the wolf  
 Hides from the passive moon, yet you may hear  
 The thin sad voices that once shook the sun  
 And squeezed cloud's bounty on the gasping land.  
 'We live as long as other men go on,  
 Sharing, like ghosts, the pride they do not leave  
 To rot in this blind wilderness of stone.  
 Bear our hopes with you. Do not let us die!'

From time to time the traveller, dazed  
 By the undulating nightmare, stops,  
 Staring in sympathy at the skull  
 Whose horns, polished by winds, rear through the sand.

It would be easy to lie down and drink the sky,  
 Or calculate the size of yesterday  
 While waiting bird flaps leather wings and laughs . . .  
*There is no going back along this road.*



# THE MAN CONDEMNED TO DEATH

---

STIG DAGERMAN

THEY asked him first how it had felt when the executioner came in through the little door and with his eyes glittering behind the tight black mask quietly told him to make himself ready, but he answered that he didn't remember, because just at that moment he had discovered his mother sitting up in the gallery among a whole crowd of reporters who were fanning themselves with their notebooks.

Then they asked him how it had felt to be blindfolded when he knew that the last thing he would see in this world was the soft black velvet on the inside of the bandage. To this he answered after some hesitation that as for a long time past he had got out of the habit of thinking anything but short thoughts, he had only noticed the cold sharp ring which the executioner wore on one of his fingers.

He went on to tell them of the strong smell of sawdust which had then suddenly filled his nostrils and made him think of the circus of his childhood, with its red and green clowns, its jangling music, and the notorious, delicate young equestrienne, known over the whole town for her beauty and her syphilis.

Then they asked him not to get so deeply involved in non-essentials, as the really essential thing now was that he was still alive, but instead to tell them which had been the hardest to bear: the loud noise as the executioner's assistants got everything ready, or the intense silence as the executioner gently took him by the shoulders to lead him forward. After a moment's thought he said that he had naturally preferred the greater silence to the smaller, but the whole thing had not meant very much to him, as even the first week in prison he had come to realize what an enormous amount of silence there really was in life.

One of the most eager in the group, a little man with a cough who was wearing galoshes that were too big for him and a fur coat that was too long, asked him in a high-pitched voice if it was true that he had already bent down when the executioner had been taken suddenly ill.

To this he made no reply, and those standing nearest him saw that he pinched his mouth into a thin red line of silence and then began swaying to and fro. Suddenly he fell backwards deep into a snowdrift, but when they leaned over him and brushed the snow off his face he seemed to have already regained consciousness, for he whispered repeatedly that they must help him, that there was no one who needed help as much as he did.

Someone had fetched a car. As many as possible squeezed into it and at a furious speed it glided along the darkening streets. One of the well-dressed men in the front seat turned round just as they were passing a street-lamp, whose cold light cut in through the window, and grinned encouragingly at him. He tried to smile politely, but the corners of his mouth stayed put, they had frozen

'Where are we going,' he said, only so softly that no one heard him.

It was one of those large black cars that seem to love funerals. The seats smelt of interments and big, hot tears. He began to nod and the squeaking of patent-leather shoes drowned the quiet, even purr of the engine. When he looked up again, dead-beat from all that had happened in the last twenty-four hours, the man in the front seat was looking at him with a tireless stare.

'Nice to be free,' said the man, 'a wonderful feeling, eh?'

Nice to be free? Wonderful, eh? He tried to make room for his elbows, but he was cooped in by flesh. He tried to stretch his legs, but a broad back was in the way. He was not so free that he could stop the car and disappear in the clean, solitary snow . . . he was free from a warder called Clarkson, who twice during the months between the trial and the sentence had lured him into writing letters to a fellow-prisoner, and then informed against him so that he could punish him with a small brown whip in the cellar of the prison . . . he was free

from four grey walls and a blue cracked ceiling which constantly dripped dampness and spiders . . . but he was not free from eight men pressing their walls of flesh and thick clothing against him in a great black car.

Suddenly, however, he smiled at the man in the front seat. The car slowed down. An arc-light was rotating on a huge blue ice-field in front of them . . . they had arrived at a large skating-rink filled with flitting grey shadows

After walking for a while through the creaking snow they came to a large, brightly-lighted building . . . he heard music from behind tall doors and the subdued murmur of conversation. He crept carefully away and peeped through a door. The people, the music, the warmth and the small lamps on the tables, the gleaming table-napkins, the resplendent carpet on the floor and the sparkle from all the green bottles, made him almost burst into tears after all this time of loneliness, cold, dread, and darkness.

He started violently when someone gripped him by the shoulder and pulled him upstairs. The whole company followed, it was like a wedding procession and he and the fat man at his side were the bridal pair. On the landing they were met by a tall pale head-waiter with an indecently strong smelling flower in his buttonhole. The fat man whispered something to him, and without showing his feelings the tall pale waiter bowed to the Man Condemned to Death and said quickly in a routine voice, as though he had said nothing else all his life:

‘A miraculous escape. A really miraculous escape.’

The room was evidently booked in advance, for they were immediately shown into a small *chambre séparée* with shaded lights and pretentious pictures on the walls. The music from the restaurant below could be heard faintly. While they seated themselves round the long table and a waitress came quickly in with bottles and glasses on a tray, he noticed with a prick of terror how an expectant silence filled the room. As the woman filled his glass she spilled some on his sleeve but did not beg his pardon, she merely smiled at him remotely and distrustfully, as one who witnesses a miracle but cannot bring himself to believe it.

Of course she knew everything, he was only waiting for her to ask as one of the woman journalists had done who surrounded him immediately he came out into the entrance-hall of the prison after his release. Are you happy now? They were the first four words he had heard after the executioner's and the prison governor's. Are you happy now?

He drank a little to try and the strong liquor ran like fire through his body. When he drank the second time he noticed how his exhaustion changed from fretful irritation to something warm and pleasant.

He made an effort to think clearly and coldly. He noticed things in the room which had escaped his attention: the placing round the table for instance was strange and disquieting. Facing him at the other end of the table sat the fat man in a high-backed chair. Like a judge, he thought, just like a judge; and down each side sat the jury, casting quick watchful glances at the accused, at himself.

As they began asking him questions his answers took on an undertone of suspicion and defiance, a tone which had not been there before, when out of curiosity they had met him outside the prison entrance.

'Well,' someone said, 'how did it really feel as an innocent man to be declared guilty and condemned to death, unable to move a finger to shake the evidence?'

'Nothing in particular,' he answered, 'after a little while it felt just as usual.'

'But surely your reaction must have been one of hate and indignation,' the fat man said almost spitefully, 'surely you must have been extremely upset that such a terrible injustice should be inflicted on just you, the innocent one instead of the guilty one, the supposed murderer instead of the real one.'

He asked them if he might answer one question with another. He wondered if any of them had sympathized with him during the time he was being examined for the murder of his wife. They admitted reluctantly that of course they had not felt any sympathy for him because the crime had been so bestial and so completely devoid of extenuating circumstances. Then he asked them if they were prepared now to sympathize with him on account of the wrong done to him in prison.

They answered that he could be assured of their full sympathy, as his vicissitudes had moved them deeply.

'What sort of people are you really?' he asked sharply. 'One second you hate and despise someone, the next you pour your compassion over him without his having changed in the least. How can one rely on your being merciful when one cannot even rely on your being unmerciful?'

He suddenly got very worked up, banging his glass so hard on the table that the stem broke. He became very red in the face and felt a fever rising in his body.

'I can do without your mercy,' he said harshly, 'I don't need it. The second week in prison I came to realize that pity only makes it more difficult to live and above all: more difficult to die.'

The fat man, who leaned further over the table the more drunk he got, asked if at least he wasn't grateful for having been saved from certain death.

'Grateful to whom?' he burst out, but while he spoke he heard someone come in through the door and stand behind him. 'Not to you, as you would only have discovered my innocence an hour too late! I cannot be grateful to chance, which in reality saved me, as chance is blind and would not understand my gratitude.'

They asked him to explain, and while the woman who had come in sat down beside him, he asked them to try and understand that from a secure existence, namely that of the man condemned to 'death, he had been thrown out into an insecure one.

'It was secure because it was built on the certainty of the world's and your mercilessness, on the certainty that one is not condemned to death or to life by reason of one's actions, but by reason of other people's conception of one's actions. You should not get so worked up over my indifference at being rescued, it is just that very indifference that forms the foundation of justice.'

The fat man said that they all understood his situation: he had had a trying time in prison, tormented by the hardships of prison life, the distressing knowledge of his wife's fate, and the equally distressing fact that the man he had regarded as

his best friend had been his wife's lover and murderer: but they had brought him here to-night to console him, and was there any better consolation than a glass of good wine in the company of good friends, than a beautiful young woman who was both comforter and mistress.

The Man Condemned to Death looked curiously at the woman beside him. Her lips were soft, red and moist, like ripe raspberries after rain. It was so long since he had seen such lips that he could not tear his eyes away from them. Suddenly he kissed her, lightly and quickly, but even so the others had noticed it.

There was a *chambre intime* leading off the *chambre séparée*. Spurred on by the laughter of the others he got to his feet, and noticed how pleasantly blurred everything had become, as though a warm veil had been spread over the bristling world. She had the key to the door on a red cord round her neck, and as soon as they were inside she switched on a wall-bracket and locked the door again. It was a strangely small room with a broad divan, and a thick red rug on the floor. The woman sat down on the divan and thoughtfully lighted a cigarette, but he didn't come to her yet.

He remained standing with his back against the door, perplexed by a feeling that there was something wrong with the room. Before he knew what it was a blinding wedge of terror cut through his intoxicated peace of mind—and then he noticed it: the room had no windows, he was shut up in a dark cell, he could not get out, there were no openings to throw himself against. Outside there was the hum of voices and the rustling of paper, he could imagine them spreading out their newspapers on the table and with dilated eyes drinking in all the sensational details. First the enormous headlines:

**EXECUTIONER'S FAINTING FIT SAVES INNOCENT MAN CONDEMNED TO DEATH** and the somewhat smaller:

**Sensational Solution of Wife-murder—Wife's Lover the Guilty One.**

'Why hasn't this room got any windows?' he asked without moving from the door.

'One doesn't need windows here,' she said, quietly continuing to smoke, 'one is never in here for long enough, you see.'

Then he became horribly afraid, he thought that the walls were creeping up to smother him, that the white ceiling was pressing down and the floor with its red carpet was rising up.

'What does one do in here?' he said, 'come and unlock the door.'

'Don't be silly,' she said, curling up on the divan, 'come here and kiss me.'

Wasn't the roof full of spiders, wasn't the whole building echoing with mysterious rappings, couldn't he hear sharp screams from the cellar?

'I don't want to kiss you,' he said, 'do you know why I did so just now? Because faced with the prospect of losing my lips for ever I got such an awful longing to kiss someone that I used to creep round in my cell kissing the walls, pretending that there were women's mouths there, and cursing all the times during my former life when I had deprived myself of kisses out of pure neglect. In the same way I was seized during one of the last days before the execution by a ridiculous desire to roll over in the snow. When I came out this afternoon the first thing I did was to fall headlong into a snowdrift.'

'Did you like it?'

Then he told her that it had been a terrible disappointment. Because the knowledge that he would never again see snow had caused him to idealize the experience.

'Perhaps I am also a disappointment,' she asked him, but he was listening in an agony of fear to the whisperings outside. Suddenly he shouted at her:

'Stop it! I am lost to you, don't you understand? I had already accepted things as they were. One cannot be condemned to death in the morning and condemned to life in the evening.'

But that wasn't what he wanted to say to the woman. Her pink blouse now lay like a careless island on the red carpet. It was the way she got undressed: he stood completely still, scarcely breathing. He looked at her with mouth agape until it was his wife who sat in front of him on the bed that evening he had come back from his long trip abroad and she got

undressed for him—no, not for him, for someone else, her movements were quite different, he understood even then.

Suddenly the woman with the red lips noticed him slowly coming towards her over the soft muffling carpet, and when the black dress stiffened at her hips she saw with shrieking eyes that his white hands were like knives.

Afterwards, when they had broken open the door and held him fast and they were walking through the vestibule, he tried confusedly to hear the music, but it must have finished for the day. The pale head-waiter stood by the door and bowed stiffly without showing what he felt, he must have been out in the cold for a long time for his flower had frozen and smelt no longer.

They came out into the clear cold night with stars like ice-needles. The skating-rink lay deserted under a solitary lamp. The large black car came leaping towards them. As they threw him into the back seat he thought: this is just the sort of car that looks as though it loves funerals. They drove slowly, without uttering a word, the chauffeur seemed as sure of his destination as though the drive had been ordered years in advance. The black ice-rink disappeared and they drove up on to the white road. He gazed at the broad secure backs in front of him and felt muscular arms pressing against his body. The seats exuded a smell of wreaths and dead tears.

They drove over a bridge across a frozen stream. One or two large black stones lay quite meaninglessly asleep on the snow-covered ice.

'Don't try,' they said, closing their cage of flesh still tighter round him, 'don't try that with us.'

*(Translated from the Swedish by Alan Blaw.)*



# ADVENTURE UNDERGROUND

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WILLARD PRICE

YOUNG foremen, graduates of British and American universities, sit at their desks typewriting reports in neat, boarded, blueprint-hung offices a half mile under the surface of the earth. Twenty underground telephones flash their messages through miles of rocky tunnels. Thousands of men burrow with air drills and pickaxes. Seventeen underground electric trains thunder from one subterranean community of workers to another, while an indicator in a central office constantly shows the exact location of each train. Underground repair shops, carpenter shops, compression rooms and power plants add to the uncanny din echoing through the hundred miles of streets of this subterranean city.

'Not like where I came from,' grins the big blond superintendent.

'Where did you come from?'

'A farm in Kansas.'

Nor is it like any mine I have ever seen before—this new home of men who have traded their overseas uniforms for costumes that make them look like a cross between a cow-hand and an Arctic explorer.

The Arctic touch is appropriate, for a blinding snowstorm rages around the Andean peak in which man has burrowed to make the unique skyscraper mine of the Braden Copper Company. Some idea of the snowfall may be had from the fact that the tennis court, when summer comes in December, always lies buried under about twenty feet of hard-packed snow. It is necessary to saw the snow into blocks, load it on flat-cars and haul it away before the boys can play tennis.

The skyscraper mine, more sensational than anything else to be seen in Chile, is not a tourist attraction, for it is off the

beaten path. From Santiago you go south by train to Rancagua, famous for its past record of three hundred and sixty-five murders a year. The town took pride in the fact that it always came to exactly three hundred and sixty-five. There are some who claim that killings were officially stepped up if there seemed danger of reaching the end of the year with a shortage, and the police hastily relieved citizens of their guns if the score was prematurely complete. However that may be, it takes an hour or more, depending on the weather, for a shuttle train to climb the eight thousand-foot escarpment from Rancagua to the mine.

This mine is Chile's most crucial test of the ability of foreign enterprise to hold its own in South America despite communist agitation. Incidentally, Spruille Braden, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State who was eased out of office because of his opposition to Peronism, has no connection with the mine. His father was one of the founders but sold his interests in the thirties.

A white storm swept our train up to the peaks where the mining camp lay almost smothered in May snow. For the not very merry month of May is, of course, the beginning of winter in Chile.

The pioneer town of twenty thousand souls, the miners and their families, clung to the mountainside. Back of the settlement the huge mountain rose like an immense beehive. It was honeycombed with more than a hundred miles of tunnels. They lay on various levels, nearly twenty in all, with elevators and chutes running from one level to another. The mountain was like an apartment house half a mile high. Ore from the upper stories was dumped into chutes like dumb-waiter shafts and dropped to the basement level, where it was carried away like the ashes of an apartment house.

But these were precious ashes! They were taken to the smelter where pure copper was extracted to the tune of five hundred thousand pounds worth or more every month.

The almost vertical flank of the twelve thousand-foot mountain was punctuated by openings like the windows of a skyscraper.

'There are about a thousand men inside the mountain now,'

said the mine superintendent as we stood looking up at it. 'We're removing almost ten thousand tons of ore a day.'

'That must make quite a hole.'

'It does. The mountain is subsiding. "Eternal hills" has no meaning here.'

As we entered the mine, a pleasant tropical warmth took the place of the May chill. The roof of the tunnel arched above like a Mother Hubbard bonnet, grey, green, and blue with gleams of copper and gypsum. We walked along a trolley track. The trolley wire was so low that we could have gripped it.

'One of our mules reared up and touched it. Instantly electrocuted. A miner who had taken first aid thought he might resuscitate the mule as he would a man. He turned the mule on his back and pumped the fore-legs back and forth. It didn't work.'

I looked up. 'What is that rushing sound above?'

'An underground river goes over our heads here. You'll see it soon.'

The rushing gradually turned to a thundering and we came presently to a ledge where the river dropped from above us in a waterfall to a pool five hundred feet below. A waterfall three times the height of Niagara hidden within a mountain was something I wanted to stand and contemplate—but the man from Kansas was too busy for reverie and already beckoned me on.

Some of the corridors we passed through were swimming in water. There was no chance of keeping the feet dry, but it was possible to keep out of the water most of the time by walking the rail. More water dripped from the roof.

'Where does it all come from?'

'Melting snows.'

'But it's too cold out there for the snow to melt.'

'In protected valleys facing south the noon sun melts enough snow to keep these streams going all the time.'

Now there was a young river tearing along beside the tracks on which we walked.

'It used to flood this tunnel completely. Now we have it pretty well under control.'

'Where does all this water go?'

'Most of it is piped off and used for sanitation of the town site. Watch out! You're walking over a hole twelve hundred feet deep.'

I froze in my tracks; and suddenly thought that Salvador Dalí could make a lot out of this weird, grotesque, savage nightmare of an underworld.

There was a space without ties. It was utterly black. The superintendent's light failed to penetrate to the bottom of it. He pushed in a rock. For more than five seconds it could be heard falling, bouncing from wall to wall.

'An ore pass. They run all the way from 300 to 1,800 feet deep. The men call it a vulture. Sometimes we lose a mule in one of them.'

'And men?'

'Not often.'

I could understand why the imaginative *rotos* should call this black, sly, waiting thing a vulture.

'You'll see in a moment how it's used. There's a train coming—step aside on these planks.'

An electric train roared in and stopped and started in jerks to let car after car open its air-pressure operated trapdoor and drop its load of ore into the ore pass. The ore thundered down to the level 1,200 feet below.

'This same ore dropped from a higher level in the same way. It goes down from level to level until we get it low enough to cart it out to the smelter. One advantage of all of these drops is that it does a pretty good job of crushing the ore.'

To the sound of a great whirring, we came out into a large cavern. Workmen steered vibrating drills into solid rock and placed blasts, for this was to be a cavity 300 feet long and thirty-five feet wide to house a new compression plant.

The superintendent always had a civil word for each workman we passed.

'Good men,' he said. 'None better anywhere. Chileans are fearless. Largely due to their Araucanian Indian blood. They're called *rotos*. A roto's favourite expression is "*Soy hombre*", I am a man—tapping his breast. Tell them, this is

dangerous—apt to get killed—ask for volunteers: you instantly get more than you can use. Or you say, "The men come up with me. The women stay here." Every man jack will go. They stand any amount of hardship.'

'You seem sold on the rotos.'

'A man's ideas concerning the Chileans depend on how long he has been here. Three months—he swears at them; twelve months—he swears by them. If they get to trust the boss they will do anything he says. See that man yonder—the one with the grin? If I told that man to hold a stick of dynamite and light it at one end, he would do it. He'd know I wouldn't ask it unless it was all right.'

In a new tunnel, men were perched in pockets in the roof, putting in blasts. Each had an air hose for his drill and a rope to climb by. In a tunnel with a soft roof a dangerous 'splicing job' was going forward—planks being driven in inch by inch as the wall below them was blasted and picked out. At any moment there might be a fatal slide.

Until now my thoughts had been egocentric, quite occupied with my own little adventure. It is not every day that one tramps through six miles of tunnels, rides the cowcatcher of subterranean locomotive, crawls through holes snakewise where cave-ins have almost blocked the passage, walks a rail over pits that might as well be bottomless, follows an underground river and ducks underground showerbaths, lies back down on a lift in a passage with so low a roof that to raise one's head would mean to go through life with an abbreviated nose, walks a narrow plank over tanks of boiling copper concentrate, passes between spraying fountains of white hot copper, dives through fumes of sulphur dioxide gas that cut the throat like carbolic acid, and—a crowning titbit that I was to enjoy the next morning—reels forty miles down a gorge through the snow-blanketed Andes to the plains on a handcar.

But all this was pale stuff beside the daily perils of the miner, whether he is an Anglo-Saxon foreman or Chilean roto. We came out through an 'approach tunnel' into the open air near the top of the mountain and looked down the valley through the flakes of a new snowstorm.

'Not all the risk is inside the mine,' said the superintendent.

'Out here—snowslides. In one slide 19 were buried, only two of them rescued. In another, 36 lost. I've seen snow 40 feet deep on top of those roofs. It reaches a depth of 80 or 90 feet in the valley and gets as hard as ice. No, there is no way to make mining a pink tea. But I'll tell you one thing. British and American companies have taught these countries most of what they know about safety and good labour conditions.'

I believed him, for I had heard the same thing from Chilean officials in Santiago. There have been criticisms, many justified, of foreign exploitation of Latin resources—but little except praise for Anglo-American labour practices. The excellent social legislation of Chile has been largely built on the model of the treatment of Chilean labour by outsiders.

Rotos of Braden and similar concerns earn double the average Chilean wage. The accident provisions of such firms far outstrip what is required of them by the accident laws of Chile. The injured man is given the best of medical attention and, if permanently disabled, is supported indefinitely. Men too old to work are taken care of.

'We have a good many old horses turned out to pasture,' said the superintendent.

Good houses, baths, club rooms, libraries, moving picture shows, restaurants, an excellent hospital, and a well-conducted store (at which, however, the prices seemed a bit high) are provided for workers.

'Whisky is our biggest trouble,' I was told. 'See the "whisky hound" up yonder?'

A man stood like a sentinel on a hilltop in the driving snow.

'We have fifty of them posted around the camp. Their job is to keep whisky out. These rotos go crazy with a little whisky—it must be something about their Spanish-Indian blood. They get too handy with knives and revolvers. So we have to prohibit liquor. Whisky runners are all the time trying to smuggle it in. You wouldn't believe the tricks they use.'

One day some men were seen carrying a tool chest into camp. Presently they were seen carrying it out again. After a time they brought it in again. Suspicious guards stopped the party this time and examined the chest. It was full of

tools. Several more trips were made and then the guards again halted the party and made a more thorough investigation. This time they found that the chest contained a false bottom under which were stored bottles of whisky.

One whisky runner conceived the idea of taking the works out of a Singer sewing-machine and filling the machine with bags of whisky. Bottles have come to camp concealed in large cabbages and one time 84 bottles were discovered in the water tank of a locomotive. The most common trick is to wear a light jacket under the coat and fill the pockets of the jacket with bottles.

But although a little liquor is brought in, the very ingenuity that is required to smuggle it in proves the strictness of the rules. Drunkenness is practically unknown. Any workman found possessing liquor is promptly discharged. The British and American foremen and superintendents have no special privileges. One American who considered the rules good enough for the Chileans but too good for him came to work one morning with a whisky breath. He was off to the United States on the next ship.

Most serious menace of the future is communist control of labour. The miners' union, like many other Chilean labour unions, is pulled by strings from Moscow. A paralysing strike closed Braden and other copper and nitrate mines in 1946 and leaders of the Chilean Communist Party tried to force the Government to 'challenge foreign imperialism' by confiscating the properties.

They failed; but in 1947 the coal mines which reach out five miles under the Pacific were strikebound. It was found that Yugoslav diplomats serving Moscow had ordered the strike through the Chilean Communist Party.

Shocked into swift action, the Government expelled the diplomats and broke relations with Yugoslavia and then with Russia, declaring that Chile could not maintain relations with a country 'which has inspired such grave attempts against the political independence of the republic and has endangered the life of the nation.'

That sounds final, but it is probably far from being the end of the story. The Communists remain in Chile. Inflation has

thrown dissatisfied millions under their influence, and increasing trouble may be expected.

After a comfortable night in a company guest-house, I asked about trains.

'Sorry—none to-day.'

'But I must get back to Santiago before night. Is there no way to get down to Rancagua?'

With a quirk of his mouth, the traffic manager took me out to the tracks.

'That's your only hope.' I looked for a locomotive but could see nothing except a small handcar an eight-foot platform on four wheels with a hand bar, at either end of which a man might stand to pump the contraption up grades.

'Is it safe?'

'Not particularly. But you said you had to get back to Santiago to-day.'

I was trapped. In the office there was a paper to sign absolving the firm from responsibility in case of accident. A roto was assigned me.

'His name is Pablo. You won't have any trouble. He's a good experienced man. Sorry we don't have a better handcar. We had two others, but they jumped the tracks and landed about a thousand feet down.'

I decided the traffic manager was trying to kid me, and proceeded with what dignity I could muster to take my seat on the front edge of the platform, feet dangling in space. Pablo sat beside me, released the brake, and we started on the forty-mule toboggan to Rancagua.

It did not take me long to decide that Pablo was too experienced. He took the curves at too dizzy a speed. From the rocking handcar the bottom of the river bed looked very far down. When we came to a slight upgrade and Pablo had to rise and pump, I slipped over to his position beside the brake, and stayed there until we reached our destination.

Not much more than a mile of the forty was level or upgrade. The rest was sheer exhilaration, edged with enough fear to keep the body temperature up.

The air was crisp and rushed by as if overdue for an engagement at the top of the mountain. The inner curves



were placid enough, but every outer curve along the cliff-edge called for a new decision as to just how much or how little pressure to apply to the squealing brake.

Sometimes a miscalculation meant a careening moment that turned Pablo's passenger stiff and even stirred Pablo out of his soft, sleepy smile.

The screeching below us made conversation difficult, so Pablo only pointed when he wished to call my attention to an object some five hundred feet down at the base of the cliff. It was the bashed-up remains of a handcar. From that point on our movements were more deliberate.

As we neared Rancagua I noticed again, as I had on the way up, the Standard Oil tins beside the track. We passed some twenty of them. Each was decorated with wreaths of flowers, some fresh, some faded, and a door had been cut in the side of the can revealing a candle inside and sometimes a religious relic or image.

I had the horrible thought that each of these represented a death on the railroad, but since the grade was now mild that could hardly be the case. I asked Pablo.

'Oh señor, they are for murders.'

'But why are they all down here?'

'Near the town,' he said. 'You can get liquor in the town. No liquor up at the mine. The men come down here on holidays. Much drinking, much shooting.'

When the car came to a final halt in the station yard I gave Pablo a few pesos.

'Are you going to drink to-day, Pablo?'

He looked at the coins and grinned. 'Sí, señor, I will drink. But I will not shoot.'

'Well, don't get shot,' and we parted.

\* \* \* \*

Comfortably riding the flyer back to Santiago, I reflected that I liked Pablo—I liked Chileans in general. They were a fearless, hardy, hardworking people. I liked their cheerful '*Como no*' Why not? instead of a languid '*Mañana*' when you asked a favour. I liked their '*Soy hombre*,' I am a man. I liked the sign I had seen over the busy desk of a Chilean editor in

Santiago, '*Sea U Breve*,' Be Brief. Living in a temperate zone, acting like people in the north temperate zone, these folk had been called the Yankees of South America. They weren't particularly pleased with the appellation. Still, there was something to it

Why the difference from some of their tropical neighbours farther north? The climate, of course—but that was only part of it.

The racial blend, perhaps. The Spaniard, German, Briton, and Araucanian Indian, made a solid combination. The largest element in this blend was Spanish—why was it so superior in Chile? The Spaniard in Peru and Bolivia was turned into a milksop by his reliance upon the Indians.

Yes, but the Indians the Spanish conquerors found in Chile were the fierce, warlike, reckless Araucanians, quite different from the peaceful, industrious subjects of the Incan empire.

The Araucanians refused to be enslaved on farms while their masters lolled in cities. The white owners were compelled to remain on their farms and share the work. Spanish character, already strong, was further strengthened. The Araucanians were never really conquered. They gradually merged with the whites and the result is the staunch Chilean.

The Italian foreman in an iron foundry of Valparaiso had told me that he had Argentine, Peruvian, Bolivian, French, and Chilean workmen, but the Chileans were the best.

It was a land of promise, with a people who could make that promise come true. And they were being helped by Britons and Americans—young men with a spirit of sportsmanship and fair play who were introducing better working conditions and demonstrating to long-oppressed rotos that communism was not necessarily the only way out of their troubles.

# THE TEMPTATION OF PAPA DIMITRI

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C. AMBROSE LEWIS

PAPA DIMITRI, the parish priest of Anatolikón, was angry. For the second time that morning he had had to clamber down from his high wooden saddle to recover his tall round hat, swept off by the overhanging branch of an olive tree. The old grey donkey had carried him down this mountain track a hundred times without walking under trees too low for his hat to pass, yet to-day every sound made her swerve aside and toss her head in the air. She had even tried to run away when Andreas was saddling her that morning.

Why should a donkey be nervous? Donkeys didn't have any worries. They suffered from hunger and thirst and fatigue; they enjoyed eating and drinking and resting; but worry, no!

Now he, Papa Dimitri, had his worries. Perhaps that was why he had not seen the overhanging olive boughs in time. The people of his parish seemed to have got out of hand. They no longer looked to him as their father. Instead of coming to him with their troubles, as they had used to, they made their decisions without asking him at all. Some of them even seemed to avoid him.

If only those wild resistance men from Macedonia, those anarchists, those atheists, had not come to hide in Anatolikón! They ridiculed his grey beard, his long hair, and his tall black hat; and the children and young men of the village, those who were left, no longer rebuked the strangers but laughed with them—young people whom he himself had baptized and whose parents he had crowned in marriage.

If only his wife Heleni had not died soon after the Germans came. If only his sons, both of them, were not lying somewhere under the snow in the mountains of Albania! He felt all alone now, and a parish priest should never feel lonely.

At last he reached the road which wound down to Calamata. In three hours he would be in the town, collecting the milk for the children from the Red Cross store.

The town, gleaming white against the blue water of the bay, had just come into view when, without any warning, the donkey swung round in the road, nearly throwing the old priest off. Before Papa Dimitri could stop her she was in the ditch and scrambling up the other side towards a huge rock which had rolled, many years before, down the mountain side and hung beside the road. The priest jumped off and dragged at the rein but the animal would not budge. Surely she could not be afraid of the lorries which could be heard on the road below! She never had been before.

As Papa Dimitri looked, three German lorries swung round the corner, zig-zagging from side to side to avoid the pot holes. The Germans were getting nervous. They were probably carrying some more ammunition to the guns along the coast; making preparations for the British attempt to return. But all the Greeks knew that the British would come back; they had said they would, all those tired, ragged, smiling boys who had marched so many miles over the mountains of the Peloponnese two years before.

What had happened now? There was a lot of shouting and waving of arms and the lorries stopped. A number of soldiers jumped out and threw themselves into the ditch.

Yes, there it was! An aeroplane was streaking towards them, attracted no doubt by the cloud of dust which was drifting slowly away in the light breeze. In a few seconds it was on them and its guns began to spray the convoy with flaming bullets. Little spurts of dust appeared on the road and bits of metal and stones whistled through the air. Papa Dimitri, pressing his body against the ground, said a little prayer of thanks for the great rock which protected him.

The aeroplane flashed over them with a mighty scream and for a moment he could pick out under each wing the blue ring and red centre of the 'Arreyéf', the messengers who told Greece to be patient because the British would come back as soon as they could—that they were not forgotten.

Once more he dragged on the rein, but the donkey would

not move, pressing her shivering grey body even harder against the rock. He heard more shouting and running about and the sound of engines being started up. Then, suddenly, the ground was shaken by a tremendous explosion, followed by the sound of things falling all round. Papa Dimitri felt a heavy blow on the side of his head, and everything went black.

When he came to, his head was singing, and there was blood on his hand when he touched his brow. His hat lay in the dust beside him, and there was blood on that too. Barely conscious of his actions, he crossed the ditch and staggered along the road.

Where the middle lorry had been there was a deep hole in the road. The other two lorries lay on their sides in the ditch, and two old olive trees lay blackened on their sides. Several silent things, in field grey, lay near.

Papa Dimitri crossed himself silently. It did not take him long to realize that, but for the obstinacy—call it what you would—of the donkey, he would have been passing beside the lorries just when the aeroplane attacked. He had been angry with the animal—he had even hit her when she left the road so suddenly. Still somewhat dazed, he only realized now that the donkey was no longer there. He could only hope she was on her way back to Anatolikón.

At his feet lay a torn service cap; draped round a huge cactus leaf beside the road were some rags, field grey rags. In his mind's eye Papa Dimitri saw his own black hat lying there, some black rags that had once been his robe clinging to the spikes of the cactus. He crossed himself again. What would the people of the parish have thought?

Suddenly an idea came to him. Why not let them think he *had* been there when the shells in the lorry exploded? They didn't seem to want him any more. The memory of his years of service might even lead them back to the path he had tried so hard to show them. The Bishop would surely be able to find another parish priest for Anatolikón, a better one.

Priests were badly needed, he knew, in the great camps the British had set up, in Egypt and Palestine, for the Greeks who escaped in small boats over the sea. He would like to see the Holy Land before he died. He knew how people got away.

Many of them, whole families, and many a British soldier too, had hidden in Anatolikón, to be led off when the moon was not too bright, down to a little cove where a caique waited for them.

It did not take him long to decide. There was food in one of the lorries and he took enough to live on for a few days, until the next caique should come. He left his hat, covered with dust and streaked with blood, on the edge of the road. His robe was already torn, and he left it on a cactus leaf. He thought of leaving the old crucifix which hung round his neck, but he would need that in Africa; the feel of it in his hand often helped him to find words that people liked to hear.

Papa Dimitri heard voices not far distant and, leaving the road, slipped quietly away among the olive trees, down the steep hill-side towards the sea.

As the waning moon peeped over the crest of Taigetos and found Anatolikón, Papa Dimitri, his head bandaged, his clothes in rags, his boots torn, walked slowly up the steep slope to his church.

It was far too late, he was sure, for any of the people to be about, and the dogs, who knew him well, would surely not give the alarm. A caique was leaving the following night for the Cyclades, whence it would be easier to find his way to Turkey or Cyprus. The captain had asked for gold. Papa Dimitri had a sovereign hidden under the floor in his room; he would get it and be back at the cove by morning.

Strange, there were lights in the church. As he approached he could see the gleam of little wax candles through the broken windows. A hymn was being sung—one he had taught the children in the school. Looking in through the window he could see that the church was full. In front stood some of the boys who always laughed at his beard and long hair. They were not laughing now; some seemed to have tears in their eyes. What was lying there on the little table before the ikon with candles burning before it? His eyes didn't see very well just then, but there could be no doubt, it was his old round hat and the rags of his black robe.

The old priest turned away. How right he had been! His

memory meant more to them than his presence, sitting in the café, buying his food in the shop, getting angry with his old grey donkey. Now he really meant something to them. If he were to go back they would soon be laughing at him again, calling him old-fashioned, shouting outside the church during the service. He would get a new start in the Holy Land.

Quietly entering his house, he lifted up the floorboard below the bed and found the sovereign. He opened a box and took out a faded photograph of his wife, Heleni and of his two sons when they were schoolboys. He blew out the candle.

When he opened the door, dark clouds had obscured the moon and he could see nothing. At the threshold something barred his way, something that should not have been there. His outstretched hand touched a long, hairy ear, a sturdy neck from which a frayed halter hung loose. He tried to push his way past, but the obstacle would not budge. He heard voices from the direction of the church and pushed again, desperately, angrily, succeeding at last in half clambering over the animal's hindquarters. Then to his dismay the village echoed and re-echoed with that most dismal sound of the Greek countryside, the long-drawn-out, determined, hideous bray of an angry donkey.

It was too late now. As the moon appeared once more from behind a cloud, Yanni, the gendarme, Costa, who kept the grocer's shop, Barba Mitso, the president of the community, all came hurrying out of the church, followed by the boys who had jeered at him, and had now been shedding a few tears for him, the girls, the women, young and old, even two of the wild men from Macedonia. All crowded round him, some shyly touching his hands, his clothes, his beard, even his tattered boots, to make sure that their Papa Dimitri had really come back.

'My children,' the old priest said at last when the lump in his throat had ceased choking him, 'I have been spared to come back to you. Something happened to me this morning when the English aeroplane came over. It made me a little mad—made me forget myself for a time, I think; but I have remembered again, and here I am. Perhaps to-morrow I shall be able to tell you more—for it will be Sunday.'

Papa Dimitri did not sleep well that night. As soon as the first glimmer of dawn showed itself over Targetos he got up and opened a large book that lay on the shelf by the window. He could not restrain a sly smile as he searched the pages, for the story of a man called Balaam.

## FOR A WINTER LOVER

by NESSIE DUNSMUIR

I should have been more scrupulous  
of that first hour.  
More measured against future loss  
the live and lovely hazard where  
soul signalled soul  
through body's tenderness  
But what had loss to do with us  
held there and holding all  
the blinding universe?

Stranger in my arms  
man clown and angel  
bearing like flowers  
the everlasting annunciation.

I do not know and never shall  
what grave or joyful mystery  
inhabits your head's holiness,  
but my strong heart has rested you in tenderness,  
my eyes inherit a lightstruck world.



# OF FLAVOUR IN APPLES

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W. L. CARTER

ONE of the most perplexing matters associated with fruits is the diversity of flavours found in fruit of the same family. In particular, flavour in apples is exceptionally variable, ranging from the almost rustic roughness of the old Catshead and the mellowness at maturity of the Blenheim, to the curious, almost alien, flavour of Pitmaston Pine, and the aromatic refined acidity of the Cox's Orange Pippin. The apple world is so large as to furnish a veritable symphony orchestra of flavours with which one can play almost any whim or fancy. Indeed, there is almost a flavour to match every passing mood or fleeting thought.

Often flavour is concerned beneath a misleading disguise, as is the case with cider apples. One bite at a crab, whose seeming beauty masks an unpalatable interior, and the recoil is virtually automatic. Yet the bitterness hides a pleasant flavour. Freshly expressed crab apple juice soon expels the brownish tannin which—skimmed off—leaves a liquid whose fame has been sung in many a farmhouse and cottage, vastly greater in potency and roughness than the modern-processed fluid now offered in bottles.

This curious roughness is somehow recalled by several fine old apples whose rude appearance seems to speak of a long extinct line of Hodges who, while perhaps a trifle ponderous in mind, according to present-day standards, appreciated good fruit. Roundway Magnum Bonum from Devizes—it sounds like a Restoration apple and fit fruit for a countryman of the days of smocks and stovepipe hats—is a mere youngster of eighty Rustic looking though it may be, like so many good things, a shabby exterior screens a heart of—well, if not gold, at least superb flavour. An awkward shape, greenish-yellow, with a few dull stripes and russet markings, covers a crisp yellow flesh of opulently rich flavour. Subtle ethers combine in Nature's own unresolved mystery to produce an aromatic

blend that defies description yet intrigues the palate. Unbecoming though it be in a writer to inflict his personal preferences upon his readers, I rank this fruit at least equal in flavour to the strange and rare Pitmaston Pine, now a respectable centenarian. This is as small as the South Countryman is large. Little, conical, golden-yellow fruits, flushed pleasingly with orange and brown-red, eat as appetizingly as they look, yet as the teeth bite into the yellow flesh a strange 'un-applelike' flavour greets the senses, a carefully balanced blend of musk-scented honey. Nature plays some mischievous pranks among apples, but her wayward fancies could have no better result than in the production of fruits like the Pitmaston.

As one might expect, age in the would-be consumer of apples exercises considerable influence on choice of variety at table or elsewhere. The sharp flavour, with the crisp flesh, beloved of the schoolboy, gives place to the softer-fleshed, mellow kinds demanded by those of mature years. The gourmet who prefers the unusual can satisfy his restless craving for involved flavours. The apple world accommodates all demands, however unusual, upon its vast resources. Rarely do we consign apples to extinction on the grounds of age-long history, as is the case with so many flowers of gardens. Those of us who are favoured with fruits of Court Pendu Plat to grace the after-Christmas dinner dessert are most likely savouring an apple grown here since the Roman occupation, but the small, flat, round, red-cheeked fruits conceal a juicy, rich-flavoured, fine flesh. That, of course, is found in well-finished fruits, but woe betide the grower who attempts to anticipate ripeness. Toughness unsurpassed and the absence of any flavour greet the reckless picker. Time is required for the aromatic essences to develop and mellow the fullness of their flavours.

Unfortunately for those of mature years the apples of early summer are mainly for the adolescent. Lack of flavour—youth stays not to consider this—is compensated by the juicy crispness of brightly coloured fruits. Beauty of Bath can be gathered by August Bank Holidaymakers. Small, bright, red-striped and spotted apples, with soft flesh, can be picked and eaten from the tree. Their sharpish flavour is eminently

suitable for hikers and ramblers in the countryside, where draughts of fresh air compensate for lack of aromatic essences. Like all these early apples, this one has an ephemeral season, little longer after gathering than the life of a mayfly. Not until later in the year may we prepare to enjoy the fruit of Pomona's worthiest efforts. Like most choice things in life, time taken in awaiting their arrival is not wasted. On the other hand, it is impossible to delight in the best flavour of an apple except at the peak of its season of ripeness, and often that is a matter of a few days. After the pinnacle of maturity has been attained a steady decline sets in and flavours become jaded, flesh develops dryness and tends towards granulation.

Some apples may be classified into groups, each distinguished by a flavour peculiar to all its members. Slight differences and variations there may be, but these are merely movements in the same symphony. Probably the most familiar of them is headed by the famous Blenheim Orange, one of the classic fruits of pomology, fit to rank equal with the golden apples of mythology. Of plebeian origin—it is about to celebrate the second centenary of its raising by George Kempster, apparently the local tailor of Woodstock, near Blenheim—this is one of the really great apples. Slow to come into bearing, as though reluctant to yield the harvest of its superb fruits, the large, red-shaded, golden-yellow apples have a warm fragrance and mellowness that, while skilfully avoiding the cloying richness and over-aromatic taste of some varieties, are right worthy to figure in dessert with the walnuts and vintage port. A fruit for those of mature years and discernment.

Unfortunately, many of the so-called Blenheims offered have been picked before parting readily from the tree, and thus are akin to some of the flavourless immature apples dragged unceremoniously from trees and stuffed hastily in pocket and satchel by schoolboys with an eye to the farmer's dog. The Blenheim, and no country has yet succeeded in producing fruit even remotely approaching in quality those from our island orchards, has a boon companion in the Orleans Reinette, a similar and even fairer replica of itself. The gleaming red, gold, and cinnamon of the outer coat conceals

a rich sweetness in the deep yellow flesh, surpassing even that of the Blenheim itself, this combined with an underlying suggestion of refreshing acidity and after-taste reminiscent of the ripened Kent cob at its best. This also is an ancient among apples, of Continental origin, and a fruit for connoisseurs, to be eaten at leisure in the warm glow of a log fire on December evenings, with the palate already stimulated by the cook's best efforts.

Those who halt in September before shop windows packed with bright red fruits of the Worcester Pearmain apple, fingering tentatively their half-crowns, should resolutely move on, pausing only to reflect upon the folly of those who are so easily beguiled by the colour of the display. The conical fruits are almost invariably sent too early to market, and it is not until several weeks later that the crisp, very sweet flesh develops the half-raspberry, half-strawberry flavour typical of this apple that began life in the great orchard country of Worcestershire. Hardly one of the first rank apples, when usually eaten it is devoid of taste and as tough and rubbery as our old friend the Ribston Pippin, which can be leathery in the extreme unless allowed to hang on the tree to ripen. Many of us are in far too much of a hurry in these times of the craze for speed to appreciate that a wise nature knows nothing of such matters as double summer-time, and ripens fruit at her own pleasure. Pomona must, indeed, be wooed gently, with infinite grace, persuasion, and tact.

It is undoubtedly true that there are apples to suit all tastes. For the schoolboy who relishes the stinging, clean acidity of a large fruit there is Lane's Prince Albert, named obviously after a kindly Prince Consort, for while it first appeared at Berkhamsted about 1840, it was not until twenty years later that it was introduced to be the delight of the young and of those kitchens where frothiness after cooking is accepted as indicating the perfect culinary apple. Large and grass-green, a really tender flesh crunches with a crispness associated more with the recreation break than the dining-room or fireside. A juicy, assertive acidity, with briskness of flavour, makes this eminently a thirst-quenching fruit.

Compared with that apple, Margil, a fine old fruit from

Norman orchards but long grown in this country, is from an altogether different world. Small, conical, dull red, with many russet dots and patches, and even somewhat unsightly, this apple is one for the discerning. Firm, juicy, yellow flesh carries an aromatic, rich sweetness that marks it akin to that most famous of all apples—Cox's Orange Pippin.

Of Cox's apple, there have been pæans of praise since its first appearance at Slough in the garden of a retired brewer from whom it takes its name. It is the standard by which all other dessert apples are judged, the very quintessence of desirable qualities. Nature was undoubtedly in her kindest and most benign mood when this fruit was created. Its children and grandchildren are many, but none quite scales the Olympian heights to which the ancestral head of the family has attained, a fruit indeed fit for the gods. Its dull orange and red shape has been more eagerly demanded than that of any other apple, yet when grown elsewhere than on its own native heath it becomes a mere shadow of its true self. There is something in our island climate that brings out the great properties in the superb texture of the very juicy, crisp, yellow flesh. As for its flavour, this has often been described as of the richest, as though the pen has failed to record the aromatic sweetness with the faintest suggestion of acidity, all blended into the perfect combination to stir a jaded palate into live interest. The fruit itself is perfumed. A store-room with a tray or two of Mr. Cox's apple announces their presence in no indefinite manner, not in the sometimes unpleasant bitter aroma of stored apples, but as an invitation to partake of the rich bounty awaiting the fortunate owner and his friends, for the proprietor of such fruit in prime condition is rarely miserly. Obviously, this is an apple not to be eaten freely at all hours of the day. Rather is it a fruit for evening dessert in late November, when the fogs and dripping trees should be shut out by close-drawn curtains. The modicum of a sound vintage claret—it should be one of the first four growths—and a Cox's Orange Pippin are indeed nectar and ambrosia as the year draws to its close, and Christmas approaches.

Towards the end of the season Cornwall has given us an apple, Cornish Gilliflower, whose flavour, fragrance, and

unusual shape linger in the memory during that awkward period from May until early August when, alas, not even a solitary apple stays to gratify our cravings for still another bite. This fruit from the shire against whose rugged cliffs the mighty Atlantic smashes herself in blind fury is almost pear-shaped, greenish-yellow overlaid cinnamon, with dull red streaks. Its pale yellow firm flesh has a high flavour combined with very rich juice of a remarkable sweetness modified to the exact point of correctness by a sub-acidity refreshing to the palate. The whole is pervaded by a curious clovelike aroma reminiscent of the old Sops-in-Wine pinks of cottage gardens. Not a fruit for those to whom an apple is merely a name, but one for the dilettante with leisure to appreciate a good thing. As to whether or not it is the same fruit as John Evelyn knew, or one discovered in Cornwall at the beginning of the last century, you may make your choice, but all that really matters is that it graces our tables from the close of the Old Year to late spring in the New

So far, perhaps, the selection of apples has been from the obvious, but the roll of names is almost legion. There are finely flavoured fruits for those preferring the softest flesh in an apple, including that variety Melba, so-called in honour of the great singer whose name it bears. There is no faltering in character like that of Mimi in "La Boheme". Canadian born, this is one of the few overseas apples that, occasionally, takes kindly to our rude island climate. A large fruit of very pale greenish-yellow, flushed with a most beautiful shade of pink, somewhat recalling that of the Maiden's Blush rose, it has very soft, melting flesh of a delicate flavour recalling that of a choice, well-finished peach. A fruit in no way unworthy of the Australian operatic prima donna it commemorates.

It might well be thought that prizes in the form of the choicest fruits are awarded to those whose large orchards and adequate finances give them an advantage. Such is not the case where Nature is concerned and some of the finest apples that now grace our tables in season have come from such varied quarters as clergymen, a solicitor, a retired brewer, farm labourer, schoolmaster, Capuchin monks, and a Belgian major, to say nothing of those apples grown in England for

centuries, and whose origin is lost. Truly, the prize is not always to the great, although the famous Gravenstein, sometimes found in British orchards, the soft-fleshed, light yellow apple of strange half-conical shape, is said to have been raised in the gardens of Schloss Grafenstein in Schleswig.

The apple is perhaps more democratic in origin than the lordly succulent grape, which has royal associations from the time when a still valued variety was found at Cahors by Henry IV, and taken by him to Fontainebleau four centuries since. But the grape has a story of its own. For the nonce we are content with that of the apple, Pomona's greatest gift to the eager worshippers at her shrine.

## EMPTY COUNTRY

by OSWELL BLAKESTON

The boy has passed, he's cut the hedge,  
He's driven far Grassmen and Weirds,  
And only high a bored bird climbs  
On day of reckoning rippling up  
A column of the air.  
A lad to care or spare  
The older myths? or thoughts for thoughts?  
The boy has passed. How now to bring them back,  
Now that the hedge is brished?

# PERMISSIBLE BUTTERFLY

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ALEC DAVIS

So general is the use of book wrappers or dust-jackets to-day that we should be surprised to see a new book without one, except in the cheapest paper-backed editions. Yet they are a comparatively recent innovation: in relation to the long history of the printed book, their story would make a very short chapter

I have in mind chiefly *printed* jackets—whether they are printed with pictorial designs or with arrangements of type or lettering. Either way, these jackets represent an appreciable item in the cost of producing the book. Their design must be paid for, their printing must be paid for; their paper must be paid for. In addition to expenses thus directly involved, they cause a good deal of work: usually they are printed on a different kind of paper from the book itself; sometimes they are printed by lithography while the book is printed by the letterpress process, and then it may be necessary for the two jobs to be undertaken by two different printers: all of which adds up to work for the publisher's production department

Nor has the publisher any way of directly recovering the cost of a jacket from the reader. The first publisher of Mrs. Beeton was able to charge seven-and-sixpence for *Household Management* in half roan, ten-and-six in half calf. If he had some roan, a publisher to-day might do the same—if he had some calf; but he could scarcely charge half-a-guinea for a new book without a printed paper jacket and ten-and-nine-pence for the same book with jacket.

One may well ask, therefore, why publishers spend their money on such luxuries. The answer is that jackets are advertisements that function at the point of sale; they catch the eye of the potential book-buyer when his thoughts are already turned to books; when he is in a book shop or at least peering into its windows.

In other words, publishers believe that you, the reader, will



be attracted to a book that has a good-looking jacket. You might be influenced in your purchase of breakfast cereals or face powder or floor-polish by the appearance of the packages in which rival brands of those commodities are sold; and to some degree the jacket, the package of a book, may similarly affect your choice. If you believe that every book-purchase you make is determined solely by literary merit, never by outward appearance—that you are never to be caught ‘like a girl, valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes’—then you may find this theory a little annoying, a little undignified. But experience shows that it is true; otherwise publishers would not go on spending money on book jackets as they do.

In these post-war years it is, however, noticeable that some publishers are now less prodigal. They make use either of the wrapper-design or of the wrapper itself for a twofold purpose. Of wrappers that are useful as well as ornamental, a notable example was provided a few months ago by Sylvan Press, with a book called *Your Leatherwork*, in which the *inner* surface of the wrapper was printed with a paper pattern for making up one of the leather goods described in the book. This practice, though applicable to manuals on other crafts as well as leatherwork, is clearly of limited application. A more general lesson can be learned from publishers who, because they are reluctant to waste good designs on anything as damageable and ephemeral as book jackets, have used the same designs on cover or title-page also. In the Cowell *Handbook of Printing Types*, already reviewed in these pages, the jacket-design, reproducing an old map of Suffolk, is used as the cover-design—and in this use it is even more attractive because of the slight grain of the cover material.

This more economic use of designs should commend itself to readers as well as publishers. Often a jacket is so attractive that one is reluctant to throw it away, soiled and tattered though it becomes; more than once I have trimmed down the front panel of a wrapper to slightly less than page size to preserve it as a bookmark.

In design, book jackets to-day range from the pictorial to the ‘posterly plain’—with Batsfords’ sunlit landscapes and Gollancz’s bold type-faces on chrome-yellow background at

the two extremes. In less extreme designs, pictorial effects and decorative lettering often go together. Again, there are jackets in which lettering is superimposed on a photograph extending over the whole printed area; there are others that depend on hand-drawn lettering and borders or flourishes only; and there are the typographical jackets. The layman may at first find it hard to visualize a mere arrangement of type-set words as having any definite character at all, let alone an attractive character. but to think of those hard-hitting Gollancz designs, or of the more decorative typography of recent Chatto and Windus jackets, is enough to correct any wrong impression on this point.

The printed jacket is no more effective *qua* dust jacket than a sheet of paper of the same size and weight, left unprinted. It is, from the reader's point of view, an extravagance, but he would, I believe, be indignant if publishers were for that reason to discontinue it. There may be no room in an austerity world for the eel or the drone, but surely a butterfly as charming as the book jacket may be permitted to live.

# REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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PORTRAIT OF WILLIAM MORRIS. ESTHER MEYNELL.  
Chapman and Hall. 15s.

WARRIOR BARD. EDWARD and STEPHANI GODWIN.  
Harrap. 8s. 6d.

THESE two books do the negative service of bringing out acutely the need for a serious study of Morris. Their extreme shortcomings reveal how superficially Morris is yet considered. True, there are better works, some of them recent, by old-timers like Holbrook Jackson; but they, too, fail to make the full embrace of the subject. A ticklish job in some ways, the embrace of this violent and gentle man; perhaps it is not so surprising that he manages to evade the attempts of well-meaning but myopic admirers. Morris, in fact, is a very subtle character, far too subtle to interest our intellectuals, who can only see the stigmata of psychic struggle when picked out by obvious phosphorescence of decay; and a few universes distant from the intelligences of most of those who have tried to probe his values.

Yet Morris—like Ruskin and Dickens—is one of the key-characters we must fully understand if we are to get to grips with the crisis in our culture; if we are to begin to learn what that crisis is.

The two Godwins, privileged to inhabit Kelmscott Manor, have succeeded in the difficult task of making Morris ridiculous. Their work is a cross between a Sunday-school tract, a not-very-successful boy's book, and a gushing drawing-room conversation. They illustrate it themselves in a style suitable for a suburban gift-book of fairy-stories; and it is no surprise to hear that they founded in 1946 the Rhodian Society 'to combat modern degeneration in all its forms, especially cultural'. Two brief citations will reveal the embarrassing but funny tone maintained throughout: (Narration) Byrne Jones crying over Morris's grave, 'Oh, Topsy, Topsy! why did you have to die?'—(Critical) 'Picasso no longer deceives even the fashionable fool or pseudo-intellectual'.

Mrs. Meynell's slightly drab book is a relief after that for a

while; but not for very long. One is at a loss to find why she wrote this biography. Nothing is added to past statements, and at this time of day to repeat the attitudes which no doubt were all to be expected fifty years ago from well-meaning but unpenetrative biographers like Mackail, is to obfuscate the issues. Here is no vision of the dynamic unity of Morris's life and work, no particular realization of any one of his great moments. (And so critics—I have in mind an essay by Hamilton Fyfe—are starting to say that Morris is one of the figures who recede into dimness and have no meaning for us now.)

On the literary side the test is the early poems. Mrs. Meynell writes, 'There is no exaggeration in saying that young William Morris's *Defence* of Guenevere was a remarkable first volume of poetry. But, as is the manner of most early volumes of poems, it made no particular difference to the year 1858 in which it appeared.' No exaggeration! *The Defence* was a quinterstantial work in which something profoundly original was poetically achieved. To treat it merely as a youthful preparation for the pleasant tapestry-work of *The Earthly Paradise* is to invert all values. It would be more true to say that all the rest of Morris's life was an attempt to understand what he had done in *The Defence* to find fresh ways of relating to the Victorian world the rich and subtle integration which he achieved at a leap in those poems and which seemed at first to have no relation at all to that world.

*The Defence* was the proclamation in fully-realized poetic terms of the dream of medieval integrations which Morris inherited from Carlyle and Ruskin. As such, it was the decisive counter-attack on Tennyson's falsification of Romanticism, and on the *Idylls of the King* in particular. It completes validly the whole cycle of our romantic poetry, and with naive immediacy grasps the imagery, the personal tensions, in medievalism. The Gothic Dream shakes off the last mists of the dusk-reverie and stands plain in ordinary daylight. In the process of this realizing clarity Morris devised a quite novel technique of poetry, rhythms of apparently flattened beat, where elision is unknown and strange elemental tensities grapple with the dislocated syllables.

Here was his great poetically creative hour, right at the outset of his career; and for this reason his life is extremely unusual. I was going rashly to write that he does not develop as a poet, an artist, but develops profoundly as a man. But that would be to perpetuate the very cleavage which his whole aim was to abolish. More correctly, one might say that, having completed a poetic cycle, he faced an impasse, and the only way out was to develop as a totally new sort of artist. The nature of the new approach was determined by that of his completion of Romanticism; it involved the need to actualize in all forms of life and work the intuitions projected on the level of artistic expression by the Romantics. His job was to heal the romantic pang, to carry the dream of fullness into actual existence at *all* levels, to find new harmonious relations of art and craft; finally to take those relations into the whole political and social field of struggle; to make the fight for socialism a fight to overcome *all along the line* the alienation of man from himself.

Thus he attempted to do as a single artist what only a whole great epoch of revolutionary change could accomplish. Hence his defeat, which was also his triumph. Hence the strange tensions in his life, the impossibility of measuring his work by the usual critical standards. Hence the enormous importance of his achievement to us to-day. When a fully intelligent book is written about Morris we shall begin to feel safe; we shall have good warrant for believing that our culture is turning its dangerous corner.

JACK LINDSAY

TALKS WITH ELIZABETHANS. PERCY ALLEN. Rider. 15s.

THE author's 'personal belief is that this book does solve finally, once for all . . . the mystery of "Shakespeare".' To many, of course, there is no mystery, and as, before he started, Mr. Allen was fairly sure Oxford wrote the Sonnets and collaborated in the plays, in a way there was no mystery for him. The solution is that the plays were written by a group using Will Shaksper of Stratford-upon-Avon as 'cover' and including, besides him, Oxford, Bacon, Beaumont, Fletcher, and others; this solution was reached by talks which the author is convinced he had with Elizabethans—Shaksper,

Oxford, and Bacon—in the other world, speaking to him through mediums in this. It is, of course, a book impossible to review in any ordinary sense; one can only record certain facts in connection with it and recount some of its findings. . . The author, who is seventy-six, wrote in the six years between 1928 and 1934 no less than seven books ‘on Shakespearean subjects, mainly Oxfordian’; his latest is an account, together with scripts, of talks with Shaksper, Oxford, and Bacon during 1944 and 1945. As the result, he is able to assert that so far from Will (on one occasion called ‘Bill’) Shaksper being ‘no writer at all but a bit of a fool’, he and Lord Oxford were ‘ideal and friendly collaborators each able and willing to supply the dramatic deficiencies of the other’ (p. 37). There also came through Walt Whitman and William Archer, the latter bringing ‘an entity purporting to be the late Miss Marie Lloyd, who began speaking and behaving in a fashion which seemed to me very characteristic, her communication including what, I was told, was a parody of a verse from one of her own songs’ (p. 28). To the lay reader, it is a comfort that Will Shaksper’s ‘frank and satisfactory answers’ quickly dispelled ‘a mistaken belief in his stupidity’. However, ‘nearly all the more lovable characters of both sexes were almost wholly the work of Oxford’ (p. 75). Shaksper the man of the theatre ‘had a hand, both as producer and partial writer in *Lear*, *Hamlet*—the last act only—*Othello*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Merchant of Venice*, and *Romeo and Juliet*’ Raleigh wrote all *The Tempest* except ‘comedy and love-scenes and speech of Prospero in Act III, Scene 3, Bravely my figure’. *The Winter’s Tale* was ‘largely Fletcher, with Beaumont also sharing’ and Francis Bacon a little. *Titus Andronicus* was by Fletcher and Peele. Lord Oxford declares, according to Mr. Allen, that *Troilus and Cressida* ‘lacks wit and has no merit of the poetic nature’—one wishes he had been present at this summer’s revival at Stratford. William Shakespeare, in this book, declares he was there in 1945, and saw Claire Luce in *Twelfth Night*. ‘She was too lavish with her lines. The sentences had no shape. A good Viola in spirit, but feeble in speech.’ He, incidentally, wrote only the comedy scenes in this play—as might be expected of one described by Bacon (p. 129) as ‘a plain man, a drinker of

sack and a merry companion'. Southampton is alleged to have acted the part of Helen in *Troilus*—which to me seems queer, in view of his father's opinion of that play, already quoted—and Philip Sidney is mentioned as non-writing collaborator with Oxford on *Richard II*. Finally, Will Shaksper told Mr. Allen, on 5th May, 1945, that he was free of the curse in the Epitaph and five days later Mr. Allen stood by the tomb at Stratford, felt Oxford and Shakespeare each side of him, and nine days later, was told he had been gazing at the manuscript of *Hamlet*, which with those of *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Henry V*, and *Richard II*, he informs us are lying in the tomb, 'in a mixture' of the handwriting of Shakespeare and Oxford.

At his request, a Sonnet was written on 20th August, 1945—I give the first eight lines —

'Enshrined in this tomb a secret lies,  
Mark ye! The body must to dust decay;  
The soul immortal is, it never dies,  
A living soul that burns by night and day.  
Perchance the ghost that walks the witching night  
May speak true words, and secrets dark reveal,  
For memories dwell in souls that seek the light.  
Like players on a stage, they live and feel.'

And so on. Criticism of this is forestalled by Mr. Allen having himself raised the question of style and having been informed that 'it was written for a special purpose and may be aid to be a constructed piece of verse, rather than a spontaneous song, as the others were'. On the other hand, Bacon avers (p. 192) that 'I think they are as good as Oxford's best'.

As I said, it is impossible to review this book. All I will venture as criticism is that it would seem to me, personally, a pity if I were able to talk to the author of Shakespeare's plays not to converse on some less mundane subject than the 'mystery', if it is one, of their authorship. I have two other regrets: 'on the basic truths of Christianity,' Will Shaksper 'quite characteristically was flippant and for that reason I will not quote him verbatim, lest I give offence'. And Mr. Allen 'felt no impulse to question Shakespeare closely upon those closing years of his life at Stratford—from Oxford's death, in 1604, to his own in 1616.

TREVOR JAMES

# NOVELS

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THE CONVERSATION. CONRAD AIKEN Rodney Phillips and Green. 10s. 6d.

PURSUIT TILL MORNING. ALAN WYKES. Gerald Duckworth. 8s. 6d.

FISH ARE SO TRUSTING. NIGEL MORLAND. Century Press. 9s. 6d.

MY FRIEND THE ENEMY. FRANK BAKER. Boardman and Co. 8s. 6d.

FRENCH VILLAGE. JEAN-LOUIS BORY. Dennis Dobson, Ltd. 9s. 6d.

THE NOVEL AND OUR TIME. ALEX COMFORT. Phoenix Press. 5s.

A FILM has been made of *Pride and Prejudice*, but the far-seeing father of a family would not automatically write his novel in the style of Jane Austen to catch the attention of Hollywood. Action, we are assured by the film magnates, is essential to the art of the cinema, action and therefore violence, and one can scarcely avoid the suspicion that the writers of at least two of these novels have listened too unwisely to the metallic voices of these gross but inescapable sirens.

This suspicion lies deepest in Mr. Alan Wyke's first novel *Pursuit Till Morning*. Here, for instance, in this loosely jointed story of hatred and revenge all the subtleties and complexities proper to the main characters seem to have been deliberately removed in order to create and sustain the inevitable atmosphere of violence. At times the narrative reads exactly like stage directions. 'He came walking, unhurried, awful. Save for the fact of movement death might already have claimed him. He still carried, as he might have carried a cane, the gilded paper-knife. It hung lightly in his fingers, almost as if it were fixed there, looped to his hand, perhaps, as a policeman's truncheon might be.' At others, the narrative resembles the notes made on the last 'take' by the meticulous continuity-girl. Here is a fair example. 'He was lying on the bed, looking



up at the lightshade's shadow on the ceiling. The knife lay on the table beside the clock. Beyond the open window a light wind curled among the drifting leaves. His eyes began to hurt, as if with unshed tears. He covered them with his hand but he could not sleep. He smoked for perhaps an hour, continuously, until the room was full of the wafting planes of blue smoke. Then the sound of footsteps came up from the street.'

It is all, one feels, the language of the cinema. Old-fashioned melodrama simply was not interested in what might lie at the back of the murder's mind, or his victims', and none of us felt the loss. But here Mr. Wykes cunningly contrives to imply that the vehement feeling of the two brothers who are at enmity with each other is not only the natural expression of a young man who has all along been cheated and bullied by his elder brother, but that it also has its roots deep in human nature. The actual murder is just a way of making life seem more conclusive than it really is. The jacket describes the story as resembling a script by Virginia Woolf for an Alfred Hitchcock film, but the resemblance will not be noticed by readers familiar with the work of these two great craftsmen.

The exercise of physical force seems to fascinate more people than ever before, and it is therefore odd to find that Mr. Nigel Morland, with his encyclopedic knowledge of crime, playing with the idea that a boy born in the squalid back streets of the East End, and a tough boy at that, would not know that even strong men flinch when kicked in the stomach. At any good school this is generally known. In *Fish Are So Trusting*, his first novel as distinct from detective story, Mr. Morland has an unwinking eye for the sordid, and in turning his talents to account he makes few concessions to less robust tastes. He seems determined to be startling. Tansey Laker, the central figure of the story, is described by the author as a product of his environment, who tries to become a successful 'spiv'. He has no moral code to hold him back, and he advances with unusual rapidity to the top. The squalid scenes seem to have truth on their side, though one would have preferred the ordinary weakness of humanity. Like Mr.

Wykes, Mr. Morland has stripped his characters for action. What the author describes as elaborate detail has been expunged by him, he confesses, in an attempt to achieve a fast, cinematic form of narrative. A curious confession for a writer to make.

Mr. Frank Baker's people are about as active, but considerably better clothed. Again we have in *My Friend the Enemy* a study of cruelty and its companion, cowardice. A playwright week-ending in the country entertains his fellow guests with an account of how he was incessantly bullied at school by a boy who is now a famous cricketer. Then the former bully actually joins the party, and at once the old relation between the two is as strong and as strange as ever. But even here, what promises to be a serious study of personality and will turns out, in spite of a genuine attempt by Mr. Baker, to be more dressing for a sensational narrative.

The French, too, have caught the germ. In *French Village* for which M. Jean-Louis Bory was awarded the Prix Goncourt, most of the inhabitants of a French village under German occupation are made at times as bad as their masters. Patriotism, M. Bory would have us believe, is a matter of self-interest only. No one would grumble at his findings if they were credible. They are not.

Mr. Alex Comfort, himself a novelist, has many acute things to say on violence and sadism in fiction in his *The Novel and Our Time*. Some of his observations seem extravagant, largely, perhaps, because he has not managed to work out some idea not in itself extravagant. But he is not to be passed over. Of artists, by which he means writers, Mr. Comfort says 'Their main contribution to the growth of cruelty has been that they have rendered it artistically respectable and have put ideas into people's heads. I see no way to avoid this charge. Writers to-day have to write about the world as it is and people as they are. They run the risk of aggravating their abnormalities by discussing them, unless they possess great power of exposition and an unshakable integrity in the perpetual drumming-in of the ethic of responsibility.' In recognizing the importance of responsibility, Mr. Comfort has put his finger on the point that matters.

After these four excursions into the now fashionable society of 'spivs', bullies, and murderers, it is a welcome change to be taken by Mr Conrad Aiken to the home in Connecticut of a painter whose indifference to success is the subject of an argument, rather than a conversation, between he and his wife. He may not be a good painter, certainly he is not a successful one, but he has at least the sensibility and vision of an artist. The fishing village in which he lives may be a backwater in the sense that it is without refined company and china water-closets but the simple life is what he enjoys most. His wife wants a great deal more out of life—money, leisure, and security. These he could give if only he would accept her advice and return to Boston. There he could easily turn himself into a prosperous portrait painter. The argument, of course, reconstructs the old conflict between the artist's desire for freedom and the claims and responsibilities of family life. In the course of the argument Mr. Aiken is scrupulously fair. With a poet's economy of language he re-creates the atmosphere of tension that normally arises from a quarrel, even when the quarrel happens to be between two people who love each other. As in Mr Aiken's earlier works, the writing here is as lyrical as ever. Fortunately he has also retained his faculty—the faculty of the poet—of always seeing the world anew. How well he uses this faculty may be judged from the way in which he describes the painter's small daughter while she is at play:

'... she was living in a world of her own, a burning and secret world of her own. The same world? a different world? A *new* world—that was it—the world of the poet, the *first* poet, the poet who saw simultaneously, for the first time, the sea and a flower. What! Dogs *and* horses in one and the same world! It was a miracle. . . .'

HUGH BRADENHAM

# STORIES

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BOG BLOSSOM STORIES. JIM PHELAN. Sidgwick and Jackson. 8s. 6d.

SOMETHING TERRIBLE, SOMETHING LOVELY. WILLIAM SANSOM Hogarth Press. 8s. 6d.

PRIESTS, PETERS, AND PUSSENS. OSWELL BLAKESTON. Fortune Press 7s. 6d.

MODERN READING, 17. Edited by REGINALD MOORE. Phoenix House. 6s.

THE short story, the psychological study, the poem in prose, these have shifting boundaries and defy the mania for classification. There is something of each of them in these volumes, which together chance to provide a fairly representative cross-section of to-day's production.

Jim Phelan's new collection falls quite naturally into the first category, its pieces follow the basic pattern of story-telling, whether the listeners sprawl beside the primitive hearth or prop up the bar at the local. Such an audience is exigent, its attention must be held, technique is everything—the suspense sustained just long enough, the change of key, the sudden twist. Style only arises as a concomitant of this, it is not hypostasized as it often is for the man staring at a sheet of paper. This primary assurance of one's technique is almost a birthright for those who have grown up in a peasant country, where there is still a genuine communal life, where people are vitally interested in each other and the clock does not dominate everything. When the Irish or Welsh come to be writers, the story seems to tell itself in terms of people, speech, and action. In the equivalent English work there will be long passages of motivation or emotional build-up, or description for atmosphere; neither better nor worse, in itself, but profoundly different. Not that all Jim Phelan's stories are very good ones but they are all stories, not some literary hybrid; and some are very good stories indeed. They have life and point and punch, and the sting is usually in the tail, which is as good a place as

has ever been found for it. *Bell Wethers*, *Plain Sailing*, and *Consummation* are masterly in their different veins, comic, tragic, or both entwined as so often in the brutal rural life.

Mr. Sansom writes for the reader, the sophisticated reader, to whom print is a habit. He loves words and uses them fittingly, so that the things he describes seem actually to impinge on the senses. He has the best equipment of any writer who emerged from the war years; his problem, as I see it, will be to discover the material on which to use it. In the best Phelan type of story, the fact of community is never questioned, and it is against this background that the individual stands out and to which his fate is related. Mr. Sansom's characters have all the granulated consciousness of urbanized civilization. They do not cohere, except when they function together briefly, as firemen or lovers. No wonder that such a state of things breeds phobias and that Mr. Sansom should find his subjects among the neurotic and the frustrated. He is not complacent about this, one does not feel that he revels in the existence of this dumb misery; he seems to adumbrate a richer medium of communication—it was Clayey's failure to find the right language that led to his destruction, and Mr. Sansom sometimes writes in parables, though you needn't notice it if that would spoil the story for you. Such a one is the last, *From the Water Junction*, where three toil-dehumanized denizens of the underworld break into the Ronald Firbank-like corruption of a masquerade house party. This is brilliantly done; action and description are perfectly mated. And that can be said of half a dozen other pieces in this collection such as *Various Temptations* or *The Vertical Ladder*. One looks forward to a longer work from Mr. Sansom. One would say that he has developed introspection far enough and that he needs a subject of such full and varied human interest that it will employ the all uncommon resources of his sensibility and his skill.

Mr. Blakeston's new book is so very slim, even for these days, and it is so hard to categorize, that there is a danger of its being passed over amongst more conventional volumes. Besides, the whimsical title scarcely does justice to the real seriousness of the contents. Not that serious means solemn.

These prose poems—they are nearer that than normal stories—are fragments of revelation. Their fantasy, humour, horror, are lit by flashes of illumination. Mr. Blakeston has resisted the temptation to elaborate the moment of insight to fit the realistic formula. He finds the exact vehicle for it, shapes it as economically as a gem carver and sets it, glowing, in his reader's mind. The art is to conceal the art. And the proof of it is that after reading one re-reads and new facets of meaning reveal themselves. Some of the paradoxes of human unreason have seldom been set down with such precision as here. If here, too, we find the now ubiquitous nightmare, there is also laughter and a sense of charity for the human condition. It is not often a reviewer wishes a book longer, as I did this one.

It is impossible to base any generalizations on No. 17 of Mr. Moore's anthology, to prophecy that literature is going this way or that. One knows one will get something good from Frank O'Connor and Philip Lindsay. The piece by the author of *The Lost Week End* we turned to with pleasurable excitement, but, perhaps because no one took a hard drink in the whole of its twenty pages, we found it a competent but dull version of the marital maladjustment theme. It is part of a novel and when the unsatisfactory husband comments on another male: 'He believed he had never seen such a strikingly fit physical specimen in his life,' we may think we have a clue to the way the tale is going. Any way it's pretty naive so far, as is Mr. Morse's story about another maladjusted suburban husband. On the other hand, Nelson Algren's tough little piece from the Depression days has real bite in it. Of the poets, Jack Clemon has got something to say, but is clotted by reminiscences at present; Neil McCallum does a good reportage of an explosion and J. J. Dean provides a most interesting memorial to John Jarman, one of the war losses who might, it seems, have been the Wilfred Owen of his generation.

EDGELL RICKWORD

CHRIST STOPPED AT EBOLI. CARLO LEVI. Translated by FRANCES FRENAYE. Cassell. 9s. 6d.

THIS book has all the human breadth and delicacy of perception which we meet in the post-war Italian films. There is

an extraordinarily appealing quality, which is simple as a child's smile and yet achieved by a calm and considered art. In it there lives the memory of deep suffering, and yet nothing broken, nothing malformed. Indeed, a serenely balanced universality, quite devoid of all sentimental illusions, seems the decisive factor! Here is no malice, no hatred, and yet a strong sense of good and evil, an unfaltering standard of values; all is forgiven, but all is judged. The cruel and the greedy are depicted with the unsparing particularity of a medieval artist, and yet they are not denounced; they too are a part of the world. They are shown in terms of a distorting environment, and yet are not reduced to it. The gnarled bough of the old olive-tree is as real as the graceful ash-sapling; each is separate and earth-rooted and thriving in its own tangle of difficulties and fecundities. The eye and the hand bless the world; and yet the struggle for the good, for the renewal of man, is for ever present, and has the last word, the only word.

What is the clue of this fine humanism of the best contemporary Italian work, sceptical and yet passionate, based on a deep sense of individuality, and yet unafraid of love, of all the claims of *people*? And is the development transitory, born of a rare moment of hopelessness and hope, a convalescent looking-out on the involved world just before the foot crosses the threshold? Only time can tell; and yet one hopes that it will maintain its complex balances, reapplying them, no doubt, in an extended situation, but preserving this sweetness of uncontaminated pity.

Carlo Levi, an artist trained as a doctor, was exiled in 1935 to a desperate and sterile area in South Italy, between Apulia and Calabria: a land to which, the peasants say, Christ never came. He tells the story of a year of exile at Gagliano: the way in which he slowly came closer to the suffering peasants, his final acceptance into their trust, into the dark heart of their pang. He knows how to evoke the bare and bitter spirit of this earth and the hard twisted shapes in which the people have grown out of it; gradually the obscure, grotesque figure open and take him in, and their life is realized from inside. To say that in the night of man we encounter an unquenchable goodness would be to make too simple a moralizing analysis. What



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we encounter is *men*: the root of man. Starved and gnarled with harsh knots of fear and arrested growth; yet man, with the quick of man, revealed in this even and desolate light.

A noble work. Here, in a Britain where the confused ardours of the war-years seem to have left only confusion, it is sharply necessary for us to turn to works such as this, where the hell of Europe, which we never truly shared, is seen to have begotten, among things less worthy, an element of deep human comprehension that goes past both easy partisanships and easy tolerations into a vision of what is really at stake, what must be fought against, what must be fought for.

JACK LINDSAY

IN THE HIGH GRAMPIANS. RICHARD PERRY. Lindsay Drummond. 15s.

FROM one of twelve croft-houses among the pinewoods which compose the small township of Drumguish, in that parish of Badenoch on the south-east marches of Inverness-shire known as Kingussie and Insh, a naturalist set out daily between March, 1944, and March, 1946, on tours of observation over a 150 square mile beat which have provided the material of this refreshing and fascinating book. Two centuries ago, before communal farms had been uprooted by the Highland clearances and large sheep-runs or, later, deer-forests and grouse-moors substituted, Drumguish was but one of many thriving pastoral townships. To-day, although the relics of his dwellings and connecting tracks remain, wild Nature has almost everywhere replaced Man the agriculturist. The compensation for this reversion and de-population is to be found in the present flora and fauna of an area which would obviously form an ideal National Park.

Mr. Perry's studies match in accuracy and enthusiasm the complex and exacting features of a little known countryside. From earliest spring to late autumn his circuits were made among both the flats and floods of Strath Spey and the formidable crags and corries of the Cairngorms. In mid-October he watched the tumultuous rutting ceremony of nine red stags and their harems; in February flushed four ptarmigan and a fox on a patch of snow-free heather, both at altitudes

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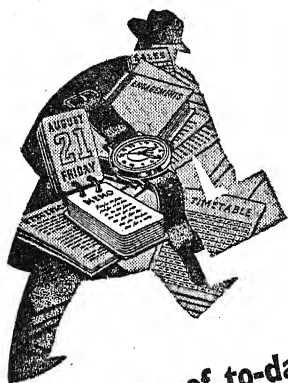
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approaching three thousand feet. His interests include the incidence of flowers and berries at various heights, the ways of wood-ants in their monstrous pine-cone hulls, the breeding-grounds of the great dragonflies and the conformation of the mountains themselves. His main theme, however, is of bird life. Here, amid specialist records of much rarity and delight, he sounds only one note of regret. Compared with the bird population over his whole beat, in which golden eagles, peregrines, ravens, kestrels, buzzards, and merlins rarely reach and never now exceed six pairs in a season, there were destroyed as 'vermin' a century ago 1,484 individuals of these six species on a single estate, solely in the interests of grouse preservation.

Discursive and familiar in style, as befits the intimacies of its subject, Mr. Perry's writings not infrequently breaks out into jewels of description five words long, which any reader who has visited the Highlands will readily accept as involuntary tributes of admiration to their grandeur and diversity. For those less fortunate a generous selection of photographs, by such artists as Eric Hosking and Robert Adam, come as near as possible to transporting to the printed page the actuality of hill, loch, bird, and flower, whether in winter or in mid-June, 'when the pines are redolent with the hot, spicy, masculine scent that breathes the sun-dried tindery aroma of summer.'

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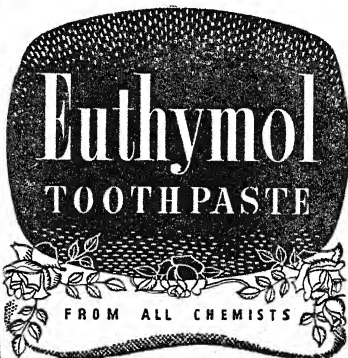
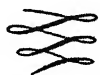
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## SECOND THOUGHTS ON STRATFORD

---

OTHELLO and TROILUS AND CRESSIDA at the Memorial Theatre, with a note on TWELFTH NIGHT, at the New Theatre, London.

A SERIES of Shakespeare's plays performed by a resident company, as at Stratford, not only enables one to see as a group parts written for the same performer, but also throws some light on that magical mystery, the working of the poet's mind, in writing those parts. Seeing *The Merchant* and *The Tale* this year in quick succession, I appreciated a similarity between certain aspects of Portia, Hermione, and Desdemona. This was not due to any sameness in Diana Wynyard's acting, for she has shown an astonishing variety and modulation, but to the writing. On the other hand, I felt it unwise for the same actress to play Ophelia and Perdita unless she has more experience than Claire Bloom to distinguish between the two flower-speeches. I would wish to go further into these points, taking Hamlet and Troilus, Iago and Hamlet and Shylock, but I can but raise them and dash on, for otherwise it would be impossible even to 'notice' these plays before the season is over.

In talking of Stratford it seems to me one has to distinguish (as one should not) between performance and production. Neither Michael Benthall nor Anthony Quayle seemed to me to give sufficient attention to his actors, even to the grouping, and too much to tricks of production. Again, in considering productions, one has to consider both the nature of local audiences and, presumably, the need of economy. The habit of not dressing to period, of putting the Greeks in *Troilus* in modern battle-dress and the Trojans in Regency-classical; of making the Bohemians in *The Tale* Tartars, and clothing *The Taming* from a travelling company's property-basket, may represent an attempt to get away from stereotyped methods, but it also results in an appearance of rag-bag, and we know the Memorial Theatre has to economize. Least harm was done

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to *The Taming*, though I did wonder why the travelling company had it in their repertory without the right clothes for it in their basket. More difficult was it to see the point of dressing *The Tale* as, literally, a Children's Tale in old Russian ballet—but so much of this play was done in fashionable darkness that it was hard to see anything for longer than I like. *Othello* was the only piece given what might be termed a 'straight' production, complete with backcloth of Venice, and this, which might have seemed old-fashioned elsewhere, I found by contrast a relief.

Godfrey Tearle's Moor was indeed noble, but he was less passionate and more reasoned than the play itself seems to demand. 'Falls in a trance' need not, perhaps, be taken literally, but this seemed an Othello who had meditated over-long, to whom this was not happening for the first time, and consequently, a little force seemed lost. In contrast, though beautiful in voice, there were moments of gabbling. Mr. Tearle is gratefully capable of cadence, but with some of the younger actors speed only results in shouting at the same grating pitch. Miss Wynyard made Desdemona a woman of character, as indeed she must be, not only because of what she did, but because that was to Shakespeare a prime requisite for being heroine. For the same reason there was cogency in Kate's merely pretending to be subdued. Petrucchio was a man of spirit, so she, a woman of spirit, would 'play'. Play she did, even to the extent of a comedian's red nose, but once again, Miss Wynyard was able to make the last 'set' speech sound like poetry. Her Helen in *Troilus* was not only a delight in itself, but the right underlining for Cressida, played by Heather Stannard, whose excellence in this role was the more needful as Paul Scofield missed something of the urgency of young Troilus. Ena Burrill made Cassandra not sibylline but demented; and she used the same approach to Emilia in *Othello*: original, perhaps, but not striking. Esmond Knight was an over-fussy, too-strident Thersites, but as a whole, *Troilus and Cressida* seemed to me the most successful of this year's Stratford productions. Both the bitterness and the beauty of this least-known of Shakespeare's major works were well brought out.

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Critics have complained that Mr. Alec Guinness has not brought out the mirth sufficiently in *Twelfth Night* at the New. I think they forget that the Fool is not Touchstone but Feste, and there is a world of difference between them. Shakespeare wrote Feste not for Kemp but for Armin; he even versified some of Armin's own writing, and Mr. Guinness seemed to me right in stressing the 'wind and the rain' element. Where he was wrong may have been in changing the order of the opening scenes, and in minimizing Malvolio—but 'wrong' is not a word which can be applied to this production, which is the most sensitive and adult I have seen for years. Admirably aided by Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Peter Copley, Mr. Guinness has freed the Belch and Aguecheek scenes from the tradition of noisy brawling; there is an excellent Maria, Sebastian is good, and Jane Baxter should, in time, add poetry to the other virtues of her playing of Viola. The set did not irritate me as much as I had anticipated, mainly because I was beguiled by the colours and the lighting. I should have liked Godfrey Tearle and Diana Wynyard as Orsino and Olivia, but one cannot have everything, and I never thought to see so haunting a Feste as Robert Eddison. This is a truly magical representation of the role, to be seen again and again.

ROBERT HERRING

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# EDITORIAL

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*November, 1948*

LET me say at once that the statement on the cover is a misnomer. There is no single caption that can embrace the Caribbean, and I hope this number will be the more readily received by our readers in and around the Inland Sea when I say so at the start.

On ensuing pages, Peter Blackman discusses why it is hard to write of the West Indies as a whole. His article, written specially for this issue, should by rights have been the Editorial for it is, it seems to me, a cogent and important exposition of the whole question of West Indian literature. From it, indeed, this issue springs. Not to refute him but, by putting writing from three islands within the same covers to show, in however small a compass, what a great difference there is between those islands, and by the merit of the writing, which I think cannot be denied, what richness there is in that difference.

Moreover, there is not that interplay between the islands which those here who talk glibly of 'the West Indies' may imagine. There are several anthologies on the way but by and large it is not often that writing of an imaginative order from different parts of even the British West Indies is brought together. I wish I had had room for some of the contributions from St. Lucia, Tobago, and other islands which were sent to me; but space did not permit. So that, even had I called this a British West Indian number, I should still have been wrong, and even that would have left out the two mainland countries of British Honduras and British Guiana, of the poetry of which latter I have heard much but so far obtained none. 'Caribbean' would have covered them, but included also by implication Cuba, Haiti, Martinique, and the Dutch islands. A representative 'Caribbean Number' would have to print work in French, Spanish, and Creole—and as the result, would be intelligible to fewer residents in the islands, as to readers here, than if it were only in English. So let it be considered that this number professes only to give some of the contemporary writing of the three most important English-speaking

islands, and let us examine briefly the difficulties inherent in bringing even these together.

Of the group, Barbados is the farthest out in the Atlantic. To fly there from Jamaica takes a day, to fly from Trinidad to Jamaica takes most of a day, and when you consider how far in Europe you can fly during a day, or even come from New York to London in less than ten hours (with a good gale behind you, as I know to my cost), you will have some idea of the distances to be covered.

Barbados is one of the most thickly populated places on the globe's surface. Consequently, many Barbadians go abroad. Mr. Blackman, himself Barbadian, lives in London. Other contributors to this issue, Barbadian-born, live and work in Trinidad. To which island are they to be classed as belonging?

Trinidad itself poses other problems. Its nearness to the Green Continent makes for influence from British Guiana, and not only do those from other islands come to Trinidad to work and live, but there is a Chinese population greater than that of Jamaica, and an East Indian one which sets it apart from other islands. These facts have their effect not only on the life of Trinidad, but on the literature which is the expression of that life . . . and these remarks which will, I hope, start a train of thought, I take leave to offer as introduction to Mr. Blackman's article, which in turn introduces and sets the background for the rest of the number. Myself will use my remaining space to draw attention to a book lately made available in this country.

Published in the United States by Harvard University Press and here (at 12s. 6d.) by Oxford University Press, *The United States and the Caribbean* is by Dexter Perkins who, in 1945-46, was the first professor to hold the chair in American history established by Cambridge University. His book runs to 240 pages and despite, as at first sight it seems but because, as later on it appears, of its title, there are only two fleeting references to Trinidad, and one paragraph, with two also fleeting allusions, given to Jamaica. The countries to which Mr. Perkins devotes most space are Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic (San Domingo), Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Of Puerto Rica, he is comparatively, and perhaps

discreetly, silent, and Venezuela is only referred to in passing. Honduras receives some attention, British Honduras none.

All this is of interest to a European reader, and particularly to a British, as showing how different is the American approach to the Caribbean, and how necessary it is for that difference to be realized. As was mentioned in reviewing Paul Blanshard's *Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean* in our Jamaican issue, all question of defence of the Panama Canal apart, the imperialist countries—Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands—are looked at somewhat askance by American commentators on the Caribbean, and Mr. Perkins noticeably confines himself to the republics. He has some difficulty in squaring republic with democracy in the case of Trujillo's dictatorship, but he makes the attempt, and whilst Haiti is the bad boy of the form, Costa Rica and Cuba, but especially Cuba, receive constant pats on the back. Indeed, one cannot help feeling that the Caribbean countries in dealing with which Mr. Perkins feels most at home are precisely those in which, as he puts it, 'the black man does not receive a very cordial welcome.' Moreover, he 'finds it as well' in his opening chapter 'to issue a caveat against that supercilious sense of superiority which sometimes characterizes the intercourse and judgment of citizens of the United States towards their southern brethren'—and this in connection with peoples of the Central American republics. Such statements as this and Mr. Sumner Welles's in the Introduction, 'the importance of hemispheric solidarity,' raise many problems to ponder. Indeed, however ruthless may be found the human aspect of the book, in those aspects which to-day rule our unhappy lives, (politics and economics), it is informed and informing.

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I should like to close with an expression of regret that it was not possible to include in this number Mr. Edgar Mittelholzer's novel, *A Morning at the Office*. It would have had to be the whole, for its structure is so subtle that I found no excerpts would give an adequate or fair idea. I can only say that it shows the same grasp of form as his story, and hope that it will soon, like Mr. Reid's novel, portions of which we first printed, find a publisher.

Critics have complained that Mr. Alec Guinness has not brought out the mirth sufficiently in *Twelfth Night* at the New. I think they forget that the Fool is not Touchstone but Feste, and there is a world of difference between them. Shakespeare wrote Feste not for Kemp but for Armin, he even versified some of Armin's own writing, and Mr. Guinness seemed to me right in stressing the 'wind and the rain' element. Where he was wrong may have been in changing the order of the opening scenes, and in minimizing Malvolio—but 'wrong' is not a word which can be applied to this production, which is the most sensitive and adult I have seen for years. Admirably aided by Sir Cedric Hardwicke and Peter Copley, Mr. Guinness has freed the Belch and Aguecheek scenes from the tradition of noisy brawling; there is an excellent Maria, Sebastian is good, and Jane Baxter should, in time, add poetry to the other virtues of her playing of Viola. The set did not irritate me as much as I had anticipated, mainly because I was beguiled by the colours and the lighting. I should have liked Godfrey Tearle and Diana Wynyard as Orsino and Olivia, but one cannot have everything, and I never thought to see so haunting a Feste as Robert Eddison. This is a truly magical representation of the role, to be seen again and again.

ROBERT HERRING

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# EDITORIAL

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*November, 1948*

LET me say at once that the statement on the cover is a misnomer. There is no single caption that can embrace the Caribbean, and I hope this number will be the more readily received by our readers in and around the Inland Sea when I say so at the start.

On ensuing pages, Peter Blackman discusses why it is hard to write of the West Indies as a whole. His article, written specially for this issue, should by rights have been the Editorial for it is, it seems to me, a cogent and important exposition of the whole question of West Indian literature. From it, indeed, this issue springs. Not to refute him but, by putting writing from three islands within the same covers to show, in however small a compass, what a great difference there is between those islands, and by the merit of the writing, which I think cannot be denied, what richness there is in that difference.

Moreover, there is not that interplay between the islands which those here who talk glibly of 'the West Indies' may imagine. There are several anthologies on the way but by and large it is not often that writing of an imaginative order from different parts of even the British West Indies is brought together. I wish I had had room for some of the contributions from St. Lucia, Tobago, and other islands which were sent to me; but space did not permit. So that, even had I called this a British West Indian number, I should still have been wrong, and even that would have left out the two mainland countries of British Honduras and British Guiana, of the poetry of which latter I have heard much but so far obtained none. 'Caribbean' would have covered them, but included also by implication Cuba, Haiti, Martinique, and the Dutch islands. A representative 'Caribbean Number' would have to print work in French, Spanish, and Creole—and as the result, would be intelligible to fewer residents in the islands, as to readers here, than if it were only in English. So let it be considered that this number professes only to give some of the contemporary writing of the three most important English-speaking

islands, and let us examine briefly the difficulties inherent in bringing even these together.

Of the group, Barbados is the farthest out in the Atlantic. To fly there from Jamaica takes a day, to fly from Trinidad to Jamaica takes most of a day, and when you consider how far in Europe you can fly during a day, or even come from New York to London in less than ten hours (with a good gale behind you, as I know to my cost), you will have some idea of the distances to be covered.

Barbados is one of the most thickly populated places on the globe's surface. Consequently, many Barbadians go abroad. Mr. Blackman, himself Barbadian, lives in London. Other contributors to this issue, Barbadian-born, live and work in Trinidad. To which island are they to be classed as belonging?

Trinidad itself poses other problems. Its nearness to the Green Continent makes for influence from British Guiana, and not only do those from other islands come to Trinidad to work and live, but there is a Chinese population greater than that of Jamaica, and an East Indian one which sets it apart from other islands. These facts have their effect not only on the life of Trinidad, but on the literature which is the expression of that life . . . and these remarks which will, I hope, start a train of thought, I take leave to offer as introduction to Mr. Blackman's article, which in turn introduces and sets the background for the rest of the number. Myself will use my remaining space to draw attention to a book lately made available in this country.

Published in the United States by Harvard University Press and here (at 12s. 6d.) by Oxford University Press, *The United States and the Caribbean* is by Dexter Perkins who, in 1945-46, was the first professor to hold the chair in American history established by Cambridge University. His book runs to 240 pages and despite, as at first sight it seems but because, as later on it appears, of its title, there are only two fleeting references to Trinidad, and one paragraph, with two also fleeting allusions, given to Jamaica. The countries to which Mr. Perkins devotes most space are Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic (San Domingo), Costa Rica, Nicaragua, and Guatemala. Of Puerto Rica, he is comparatively, and perhaps

discreetly, silent, and Venezuela is only referred to in passing. Honduras receives some attention, British Honduras none.

All this is of interest to a European reader, and particularly to a British, as showing how different is the American approach to the Caribbean, and how necessary it is for that difference to be realized. As was mentioned in reviewing Paul Blanshard's *Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean* in our Jamaican issue, all question of defence of the Panama Canal apart, the imperialist countries—Great Britain, France, and the Netherlands—are looked at somewhat askance by American commentators on the Caribbean, and Mr. Perkins noticeably confines himself to the republics. He has some difficulty in squaring republic with democracy in the case of Trujillo's dictatorship, but he makes the attempt, and whilst Haiti is the bad boy of the form, Costa Rica and Cuba, but especially Cuba, receive constant pats on the back. Indeed, one cannot help feeling that the Caribbean countries in dealing with which Mr. Perkins feels most at home are precisely those in which, as he puts it, 'the black man does not receive a very cordial welcome.' Moreover, he 'finds it as well' in his opening chapter 'to issue a caveat against that supercilious sense of superiority which sometimes characterizes the intercourse and judgment of citizens of the United States towards their southern brethren'—and this in connection with peoples of the Central American republics. Such statements as this and Mr. Sumner Welles's in the Introduction, 'the importance of hemispheric solidarity,' raise many problems to ponder. Indeed, however ruthless may be found the human aspect of the book, in those aspects which to-day rule our unhappy lives, (politics and economics), it is informed and informing.

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# IS THERE A WEST INDIAN LITERATURE?

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PETER BLACKMAN

HAVE the British islands in the West Indies produced a distinctive literature of their own? The answer to this question truthfully and straightforwardly given must be no. West Indian literature with an ethos and flavour all its own, is like West Indian society in the same sense, emergent. Scattered throughout the islands at all periods of their history there have been individuals who have written some verse, some prose, often of passable quality; in more recent years a West Indian here and there has turned to fiction and written a novel or two. But these individuals have as a rule written in isolation, unaware of what others were doing in the rest of the Caribbean, bound to and inspired by no definite tradition rooted in West Indian soil. The one exception to this would probably be found in present-day Jamaica. None of these productions has won a place in world literature or is of a quality comparable to the work of writers in Spanish America or even in some of the French West Indies, communities with which the British islands have much in common historically.

To understand why these islands potentially so exciting and rich in literary material have stagnated in a drab provincialism or have done nothing at all, one must examine their social and historical traditions and the influence these have exercised on cultural development.

The British West Indian communities are part of the vast human migration from the Old World to the New which beginning in the fifteenth century only began to ebb in the twenties of this. The islands, comparatively small and of almost negligible importance to European investment to-day, were once the hub of the British Empire. English money flowed to them, and Englishmen of all sorts went to them, but not to stay. The money too that was made in them came back

to beautify and enrich England, to found noble families, build splendid country houses, and to be turned to other possibilities of wealth. Beckford, Lascelles, Gladstone, names like these come haphazardly to mind in this regard. Unlike the Spaniards the English did not develop a new life in their islands with standards comparable to those then existing in their homeland. This is important because English values ruled throughout society and left their impress for good or ill on all aspects of life.

In the islands there never grew up a leisured class. Till well on into the nineteenth century English children were sent home to school, there were no bookshops, and in some islands not even a printing press. Henry Nelson Coleridge, cousin of the first Anglican bishop of Barbados, contrasting the capital of the French Martinique with what he found in the British islands in 1825, writes: 'I must notice with praise the existence of four booksellers' shops, as large and well-furnished as any second-rate ones in Paris. The sight of books to sell in the West Indies is like water in the desert, for books are not yet included in the plantation stores for our islands. The cause is this. The French colonists, whether Creoles or Europeans, consider the West Indies as their country . . . they marry, educate, and build in and for the West Indies and the West Indies alone. In our colonies it is quite different, except a few regular Creoles . . . everyone regards the Colony as a temporary lodging place where they must sojourn in sugar and molasses till their mortgages will let them live elsewhere. They call England their home, though many of them have never been there; they talk of writing home and going home and pique themselves more on knowing the result of a contested election in England than on mending their roads, establishing a police or purifying a prison. The French colonist deliberately expatriates himself, the Englishman never.'

This remained true of the British West Indies with the possible exception of Barbados. Nevertheless, English values remained dominant, as we have said above, even though represented mainly through estate-managers and overseers whose interests were limited to canes and sugar, and the transient representatives of the Crown and employees in the public

service, like them passers-by. These values shaped and determined society which apart from the whites was composed mainly of Africans and a considerable minority of people of mixed birth known generally as mulattoes. With the nineteenth century this basic population in some colonies, notably Trinidad and British Guiana, was considerably modified by an influx of new workers to take the place of the Negroes and coloured people on the plantations. The largest proportion of this new element consisted of Indians, though there were some Chinese, Maltese, Portuguese, and sundry other groups from Ireland and even Germany.

The nineteenth century, too, saw the first concerted attempt to teach any considerable proportion of the inhabitants to read and write. This attempt in the hands of the Christian sects was directly mainly towards those of African origin. The Indians, adherents usually of the Hindu or Mahomedan religion, were more resistant. There was also in their case a language barrier to overcome. So the Indians, even to-day, are for the most part still not literate in English. This language barrier did not exist with the Africans. These last had, indeed, by a policy common to all slave-holding countries of the New World, lost their ancestral languages and with them most of their cultural content. Certain dim inchoate memories of the worship of individual regions from which the Africans came here and there survived, together with traditions of family organization which have greatly influenced West Indian social life. But for lack of a written language (something common to most of the African areas whence the Negroes in the West Indies came) these survivals, though they never totally disappeared, could at best in diminishing intensity serve as mere props to the self-respect of the people of African origin. They were to have one grand extrovert expression in the Back-to-Africa movement of Marcus Garvey and still, occasionally, working in the subconscious of some black poet fire his nostalgic Ethiopianism to pen a sonnet to Africa. They could offer no lasting opposition to the dominant Western heritage as represented in the learning of Europe. Nevertheless the fact of Africa dimly remembered and badly understood, often, indeed, grossly misunderstood, is a factor to be reckoned with

when assessing the difficulties and complexities which surround creative effort in the West Indies. For people of African origin in the New World are yet to assess themselves dispassionately in relation to Africa, to discover and accept what this means for their status among the peoples of the world. At present ignorant of, and often ashamed of Africa, they are caught in a psychological dichotomy most damaging to creative effort.

For the British islands the Western heritage meant 1066 and all that. Within its limitations (and they are very real, few, except an occasional scholar ever manage to transcend them) certain well-defined conventions had governed the relations between the groups which made up West Indian society. The white man, proud, dominant, domineering, exacting respect by coercion; the Negro quiescent, apparently humble, apparently acquiescing, always the one expected to serve. Often enough at unselfconscious levels the two cultures met unknowing of each other, dim memories of a rapidly fading heritage caught here and there a word or two without understanding their significance and intertwined them with the rarer permanencies of another tongue. Thus the Creole white used patois from infancy with the Negroes, and any day you might hear some black huckster who had never heard of the Fens say with Cromwell 'I would remember you' where she meant 'remind'.

Yet spite of all the seeming equilibrium won by force, the white man knew many a night of sickening fear when life went green within him and thoughts of blood grew redder than the cane-fields that flamed about him. The Church knowing that the Negro was not always quiescent and, true to the old policy that one cassock is worth a regiment of soldiers, worked hard to claim the Negro for religion. In no contemptible measure it succeeded, but it is to be doubted whether good bishop Coleridge of Barbados, as he led the Te Deum of Thanksgiving on Emancipation Day, 1838, could have heard the ribald rhyme still current in Barbados twenty years ago:

First o' August come at last  
Bakra done cut nigger—

Even less likely is the good divine to have noticed the undercurrent of sceptical resentment in:

Bar de window, bar de door,  
Bar, bar Jesus out at de door.  
If he's a white man le' him come in,  
If he's a nigger le' him stan' out.

Nevertheless, it must be admitted that West Indian society, like other New World societies, was and is deeply bitten with what Madariaga calls the 'yearning toward whiteness'. This is understandable enough in a society where property follows the colour line and where the white man owned the land, and had it in his power to give or withhold the social rewards. It is a consequence of the economic and political dominance of Europe. But like the other aspects of Colonialism its effect on West Indian life, particularly in that aspect of it with which we are here concerned, was disastrous. England was the norm, to be stamped 'Made in England' was the hall-mark of excellence.

Good enough in itself, but not good enough for the West Indies. Enthusiasm, as Nurse Cavell discovered, can be mis-directed. English is the only language that most West Indians know. It is a language of which they are proud, and from which they seek to wrest all the beauty and suppleness inherent in a strong language. But not for all West Indians, if indeed for any, is the whole content of the English heritage enshrined in the English language valid. Nevertheless we find that English patterns of thought, English canons of beauty are taught and accepted even at points where they are hostile to the self-respect of most West Indians.

With the emergence of West Indian nationalism these facts and their consequences are being questioned and explored today, but in the past their effect has been to make the work of West Indian authors derivative in poetry and negligible in prose.

The poet, particularly, needs the joy for which David's wife despised him, the joy of dancing before the people. This joy like other creative emotions springs Antaeus-like from the earth and Antaeus-like, needs the good earth on which to renew itself. Else the authentic fire is lacking, since in the long run the poet is writing not of himself or for himself or for people like himself who can share and judge his emotions and

experiences, but with an eye on far-off critics who neither know nor care what he is trying to say; who cannot understand his feelings and would not uphold them if they could enter into them.

What is true of poetry is no less true of prose. With the poverty of the islands and the still relatively high proportion of illiterates, many West Indians cannot buy books, and many more cannot read them. The West Indian author, therefore, who hopes to succeed as a novelist, looks outside the islands for a market. In most cases his hopes are pinned on England. But the themes he touches, the questions he raises, cannot greatly interest, can often disquiet and embarrass Englishmen.

Now, the story of the West Indies is an exciting one. In nearly every direction the history of the islands, with a validity of its own and not as a mere appendix or footnotes to a European theme, awaits exploration. Bedevilled as they have been by centuries of hate, prejudice, and fear, the social relations of the West Indies offer adventures more explosive in quality than any Joyce ventured upon in *Ulysses*. The West Indian novelist who, along the lines of Joyce's intention, fearlessly and honestly examines his society and writes about it in the accepted traditions of clarity and elegant expression, will one day make a great and permanent contribution to the literature of the world.

He will have to be a West Indian big enough to shirk nothing, neither Africa nor Europe nor the outpourings of any continent which have gone to make the West Indian people. He will need a deep understanding of and deeper sympathy with human frailties as he uncovers the violence, contempt, and deceit implicit in the dealings between alien races. He will need a warm faith in human destiny to foster the hope soft and fragile as a new birth and as strong in promise of a better life arising from amid the crabbed and tortured contrivances with which men have hitherto managed to hedge existence in the islands. He will need stern self-discipline to enable him to play his part in the struggle for national self-respect, while keeping his own self-respect alive. Finally, he will need courage and the wisdom born of deep self-knowledge, lest when the icy winds of criticism blow around his frozen thighs, he cast his gifts away

in hasty fear because they can claim no other place of birth than the Caribbean.

Such men as this will be born out of the struggle for nationhood now beginning to take shape in the West Indies. It is a struggle based upon the hunger and frustrations of the common people. What its outcome shall be, West Indian writers can in no small way help to determine. Already many West Indians know by experience that England does not know how they live and in the nature of things cannot greatly care what is the quality of their lives. The jolt of this first shock to their carefully nurtured Englishry once past, these men do not hate England. They simply determine that it shall no longer be possible that the English nation shall have the power to interfere with their lives.

From the writers among them we may hope for the evaluation of a new and valid West Indian aesthetic.

# GREATNESS AMONGST US

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## CLAUDE IVAN LUSHINGTON

**W**EST Indian History is not without its romantic figures; nor is it completely lacking in examples of true greatness—those choice rare spirits that have held service above preferment and that have given full measure of devotion to a cause have not entirely been absent from the West Indian scene. One of these rare spirits was my great-grandfather, the late Sir Conrad Reeves.

Seldom has any man begun life more humbly and finished it more eminently. Born into a slave world he died a Chief Judge and a Knight. But it is not as a jurist that he interests us most, though his Charges to the Grand Jury mirror a man of remarkable foresight. Rather it is his political career which gives us the evidence of his genius and his greatness. The inscription which appears on the base of his bust in the Barbados House of Assembly testifies to this. The inscription reads: 'A grateful memorial to his distinguished services in the House of Assembly from 1874 to 1886, and especially of the part he took in defending and maintaining the constitutional rights and privileges of the people of the Island at the critical period of 1876-8.'

There is so little left of both his early and later life that the writing of his biography will present to his biographer a particularly difficult task, and perhaps the true story of his trials through life, his thoughts and sentiments may ever remain buried with him. This much we know however: that he was the son of a slave mother, and that he was once a joiner's apprentice. It was during this time that he first appeared in the House of Assembly of Barbados, though this was quite a different appearance from that which he made as a member some thirty years later. The story runs thus: in rags, he was sent to deliver a piece of furniture in the Chamber of the House. Apparently it was in session and he remained to listen. Seeing this tramp-like individual in so august an atmosphere,



the janitor threatened to throw him out, if he did not himself leave; whereupon he exclaimed: 'You may throw me out to-day but I shall come back here and there will be many who will come to hear me!' How prophetic were his words! The day did come when Conrad Reeves returned to the House as a legislator; when he became the most powerful man there, and when, as the most respected man in these parts he was referred to by Joseph Chamberlain as 'exceptional' and by Froude as 'possessing uncommon talents'.

At some point in his career—we do not know when—he became acquainted with Samuel J. Prescod, the famous journalist. We are not aware of what it was that brought them together; but perhaps we can conjecture that it was because Prescod, a discerning man, saw greatness in him and fostered him. But whether it was by chance or design we know that he was employed as a reporter by Prescod. As a reporter he frequently went to the House to report the meetings. It was at this stage that he acquired his knowledge of debate and other parliamentary processes which was to serve him in such good stead when he himself became a member several years later.

Next we hear of him being called to the Bar of the Middle Temple at the age of forty-two. It was then that he wrote to Lord Brougham to inquire what chance a coloured man had at the English Bar. We do not know what advice Lord Brougham gave him, but we do know that he returned to Barbados to practise there and that he laboured obscurely for a decade or more, struggling all the while in the rat-trap jaws of poverty, until his eminence at the law brought him to the top, when, as the leading counsel, he figured in every major case before the Supreme Court of the island.

He was now past fifty, and still to start his political career, a career which to this day remains unrivalled in its brilliancy. Perhaps he might not have gone into politics at all, if it had not been for the despotism of Sir John Hennessy, whose high-handedness aroused the ire of Barbadians and called him out into the hurly-burly of the political arena. Resigning his office of Solicitor-General, he stood for the Parish of St. Joseph and was returned to the House. He was then fifty-four years of age.

Once in the House his genius and his greatness became noticeable. He was adroit, shrewd, and masterful. He could hold others in the palm of his hand, sway them with his logic and bend them to fit his purpose. But it must not be thought that he was unscrupulous or that he was merely ambitious. This would be contrary to the facts; for if we remember, it was he who drafted the memorial which was presented to Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria by a deputation of Barbadians on the 2nd August, 1876, the day after Lord Carnarvon addressed the Lords on Barbadian affairs; and as a grateful tribute he was presented with an address and one thousand guineas. Surely this was recognition of his sincere motives and evidence of the esteem entertained for him.

And now we may ask what was this principle for which he fought? Clearly he was no opportunist, but a man of deep-seated conviction and belief; a great lover of freedom and democracy. To him Hennessy's six points were undemocratic; and believing as he did in the righteousness of representative government and the iniquity of autocracy he could not but pit himself against the Colonial Office, and also the mass of the coloured people whom, ostensibly, Crown Colony Rule was designed to protect. He could see no justice in a system that ignored a people's wishes and in a government which was composed entirely of nominees. It was on these grounds that he fought, in turn, the Colonial Office and the landed gentry and beat them both.

It was because he stood up in the house, alone in splendid isolation, a voice crying in a wilderness, that to-day the House of Assembly still stands in the island of Barbados and elected members form part of the Governor's Executive Council.

There are those who would explain him away as a clever lawyer scheming for fame, and those who would dismiss him as a tool in the hands of the absentee proprietors. To say or to think thus is greatly to malign a great spirit, a noble character and the purest motives.

His political career was short, ending with his triumph over the Crown Colonists, but a new career began with his appointment as Chief Judge in 1886, when he was also knighted. As Chief Judge his Charges to the Grand Jury, most of which

are recorded, are worthy additions to the compendious field of legal literature; they reflect his foresight and his humane-ness.

Wherein lies the explanation of this remarkable man?

There are those who are born great, those who achieve greatness and those who have greatness thrust upon them. Conrad Reeves did not have greatness thrust upon him. Perhaps he was born great; more likely he achieved greatness.

When he died in 1902, there had crossed the Bar the greatest statesman the West Indies had produced, a statesman who was able to see far ahead of his time; able to see that the Crown Colony Rule would fail in its objective; that it would turn out to be a greater incubus than the system it was designed to replace; and finally a real democrat, who would not yield one iota of his freedom and his democratic right to elect representatives.

# LONDON

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## PETER BLACKMAN

Stand here and watch  
The tidal waves of human lives  
Converging  
From every shore;  
Crowds  
Sour as water stagnant  
In a Fenland,  
Never moved to laughter  
Save at others' hurt;  
The deep repulsion of strange vivid strengths recoiling  
From the shock of meeting;  
Out of this turmoil I was born.

I am London.  
These fashion me  
As I am;  
Beget upon me  
Strange imaginings;  
The lone mirages  
of outraged virginity  
Seeking resolution.  
These are my children.  
Daily  
The bastard brood  
Defile me,  
Turning inward  
For their delight.  
Come, I will show them,  
Each to his thought,  
His speech each to his power.

Marvel not  
At the strangeness of my creations,

Many men have ploughed upon my field,  
 All paid and stayed  
 The while they could,  
 None wooed for long  
 It was not that I loved them,  
 It was not that pleasure with them  
 I could either take or give;  
 They served, and in their strength  
 I grew to majesty.

## II

Came a maid  
 Of wondrous beauty,  
 Formed as of quivering bronze.  
 Her kinship owed  
 Rebellion rude  
 Of several bloods;  
 She passed, and passed thus brooding:  
 All men revile me,  
 All deny me  
 Right of kinship in their halls;  
 Sum in me  
 The vices of the nations.  
 Hate sits in my bones,  
 The vengeful hate of conquest  
 Was rudely uttered  
 In the caresses of my father  
 When he begat me.  
 My mother,  
 Bruised and broken  
 Wept,  
 Frenzied by his embraces  
 When she conceived me,  
 Delight in every tendon,  
 Hatred in her heart.

I am a woman of sorrows  
 And acquainted with grief,  
 The Painted Whore.

Not Rome,  
 Nor Babylon,  
 Nor modern counterpart of each—  
 Paris, New York, or London,  
 But flesh and blood  
 Daughter of man's strength,  
 Usufruct of marriage  
 Named a child,  
 Yvonne, Juliette, or Maude.  
 The Bitch within the skin  
 Some call me,  
 Others, Magdalene.  
 These last are they  
 Whose God cohabits virginwards  
 Leaving to lesser loins  
 The summing of the Zone's now broken total;  
 A wider choice from censure free  
 Below the salt.  
 Yet these and those alike  
 A thousand hells have harboured in my loins,  
 Have used, devoured, and scorned,  
 And cooled a thousand red-hot passions in the floods  
 Of my physical consenting.

She spake,  
 The bitter tear thrust inward  
 Like a pearl;  
 The flesh all faulted,  
 Born to brilliance  
 Out of agony.

### III

Steel upon steel,  
 Mile upon mile of grey girders,  
 Telegraph poles  
 Swift with wind murmurs—  
 The Colossus spans the world,  
 Clay for the feet,  
 Gold for the heart and the head,

Sawdust embrazened.  
 Fearful looms  
 The new Moloch  
 Seeking with passionate hate  
 For the pulse of the life-flow;  
 The soul, the heart and the bones  
 Of men to bestride.  
 Sawdust embrazened,  
 Clanging steel upon steel,  
 Mile upon mile of grey girders,  
 Telegraph poles  
 Swift with wind murmurs,  
 Gold for the heart and the head,  
 And clay for the feet.

## IV

How like a morsel harried forth of hell  
 The tenement stands  
 In grim abandon of ruinous dance with death.  
 Death steps here, but not with dignity.

Imperial people,  
 Still runs the tale of Empire red with blood.  
 Rear the mausoleum,  
 Trail the hearse  
 Hung o'er with tasselled guilt of many another life.  
 Death steps here, but not with dignity.

Frustrated rage, vicarious, deadly,  
 Passions embattled in grim deed undone  
 Grave blood for atonement.  
 Death steps here, but not with dignity.

Flesh must weep, where flesh is broken.  
 Then flood the waters,  
 Cut deep the sabre-edge of Hate,  
 The pattern wrest e'en from the body's roots,  
 Nor let shrewd afterthought of love save Noah from death

To recreate this form  
In other worlds of life.  
Here Death steps.

V

I have seen a people cursed,  
Cursed by its own too much desire,  
Life made a tangle of strange meannesses  
Miscalled ambition.

Grey masks in the dusk  
Their leprous faces front me darkling,  
Full of hate.  
Fearful hate,  
Spawn of hot-headed rivalry,  
Kindred in meannesses.  
Millions, so many;  
Bodies sprawling earthwards,  
Million bodies soon fragmented into dust,  
Bodies mating deathly with steel splinters.  
God, contemplating these despaired of Hell.

I stand amid the blood, fear, and confusion,  
Silent.  
I feel not for these bodies,  
I cannot mourn these bodies.

This one had peddled all her love to a little Chinese dog,  
Had fed him tid-bits while little children starved,  
This one, the one who sent my wife in tearful humiliation  
from her door.  
My wife was big with child;  
Bigger the tears this hurt brought to her eyes.  
This one, the one who lodged the little Chinese dog,  
Could find no lodgement from the madness round  
For a woman and her unborn child,  
Since both were black.



Now she too lies in tid-bits  
 Spurned even by the little Chinese dog.  
 I feel not for these bodies,  
 I cannot love these bodies,  
 I mourn not these bodies.

In other days I might have mourned  
 That I shared breathing with them.  
 In other years I feared to share  
 The Resurrection with them.  
 Now fears are fled;  
 I share  
 The wide world with them.  
 Here I shall gain a standing for my manhood,  
 With them, or despite them;  
 Shall always beat down those who still would parley with  
 them.

## VI

The tumult and the shouting rise  
 To mad crescendo.  
 Priapus stalks abroad  
 The phallus humorous.  
 Damsels inventive stand  
 Inviting union.  
 Whom shall we have for unsung hero  
 On the eleventh day of the next eleventh month?  
 In his eleventh year, this child?  
 The bombs drop, the thrushes pipe their praise  
 In still, small voice,  
 Unheard.

I came to my people,  
 My people wept  
 And found no comfort  
 Throughout long joyless days and nights of sudden terror.  
 Ye prophets and ye lying ones,  
 When will ye speak a language understood of the people?

I brought her daffodils, white daffodils,  
 She said, 'Bring no more daffodils, white daffodils;  
 Their odour is too much of death for these days.'  
 Flowers, withering under threat of dissolution,  
 All creeds are outmoded. There is no stay.

## VII

Weep not beloved,  
 Or, if weep you must,  
 Weep unashamedly  
 And 'suage the soaring passion of your heart,  
 Lest suddenly  
 The torment rend you  
 And leave you less than man.

Not with Pilate  
 Lies the need on you  
 To proffer clean-washed hands  
 To emphasize your separateness from guilt,  
 That Rachel weeping for her children  
 Will not find them here.  
 They died in Barcelona,  
 Shanghai, Addis Ababa,  
 This full seven year.

Friends then with Nero fiddled while Rome burned;  
 They watched the human sink beneath the symbol,  
 Bade women rot and stalwart men decay,  
 Children still unseeded in them.  
 Now Nero stands  
 Amid his stagnant puddle  
 Frantic in passion, mocked by skies that will not give him ear,  
 And so to stoop  
 More than one half patched and palsied  
 To gather fragments of a broken life.

Still they pass by,  
 Ghosts

Insubstantial pageants  
 Compounded all of air,  
 Thin air.  
 So they earn wages,  
 Token of the life to come.  
 Bread is to-morrow.  
 Or the grave.

Let us now praise famous men,  
 Those who forbid us thought of resurrection.  
 There is no vision,  
 Here the people perish.

## VIII

Here is no place for cryptic phrasing,  
 Here no time for hidden meaning,  
 The word must shape its senses plainly or we die.  
 When simian madness shatters all foundations  
 Men must tame brutes.

Let cowards shrink,  
 Let traitor phantoms cry How long Lord!  
 Who will stand by  
 All sicklied o'er with fear,  
 Those let the deluge take,  
 Such we can spare.  
 Doubts infantine, hesitation,  
 Can here find no place  
 Now must our passion be translated  
 Into the idiom of force.  
 The men we hate will choose our living,  
 Or we forestall them.

The peoples rise, like seas, tumultuous;  
 Come, ride the flood!  
 The peoples rise, like seas, tumultuous,  
 Come, ride the flood,  
 Ere 'twixt high tide and ebb the power dies.

The fight is fierce;  
Chance of battle falls to none  
Who dare not bravely lead;  
Speak, those who know.

Comes the accounting.  
Will you then say that others wrought this shame?  
Of you and your strength is this murder all compounded,  
From you and your strength only comes its end.

The peoples rise, like seas, tumultuous.  
No runic charm will incantate this flood,  
Here no mystery, here no gods,  
These are men  
Of bodies, parts, and passions  
To clear purpose welded.  
Let those who say that 'we are gods'  
Beware the madness of the people.

# DAVID'S WALK

---

G. W. LAMMING

WINDING between desolate fields of cane was the long metallic, white road, rising and dipping in the distance. The old trucks laden with canes passed and sent the dust spiralling in the air, like thick smoke from the mouth of a factory chimney, and the wind, manœuvring past the impenetrable palms that fringed the trenches, came playfully along the cane-tops, leaving the dust to fall senselessly to the surface of the road again.

After the old decrepit trucks had ambled out of sight, the silence of the road, broken now and then by the rustle of wind slipping through the canes, sent a tiny shiver through the spine, leaving the mouth waterless and unsavoury.

Early in the morning, before the horn from the estate assured the villagers that it was the seventh hour and time to be settled about the occupations of the day, little barefoot boys, their caps pulled in a transverse way and their belts drawn taut about them, jittered along this road for the school, St. Christopher's, which was on the main street. When you saw them speeding along in the role of distinguished jockeys and reputed drivers, you saw the pride and virility of the village's prospective manhood. Some lingered behind to splash the water from the trenches, while others wrestled in the semi-circular heaps of trash which stood at great intervals along the embankment.

At the junction of the main street and David's Walk, this long, desolate road that led from their houses, they scrambled to wash their sweating bodies before entering the school. In the afternoon, under the burning sun, they scampered homeward, lashing the air and the canes and any unfortunate companion who ventured near with their knotted belts. Some were busy plunging their mossy teeth into knotty stumps of cane. They wrangled confusedly about the triumphs and misfortunes of the day, prolonging their discussions on

the ability and tact of their teachers and making now and again a flippant comment in plaintive undertones about Miss Patrick's lipstick or the other's favourite 'man' At the other end of the road they knelt to wipe their hands and faces in the thick clusters of grass and pea trees. Then they vanished, leaving the echo of their voices and the livid silence of the road.

For five days of the week David's Walk offered this spectacle. It had become ritualistic. This desolate stretch of sand and stone had been woven into the hearts of the people. The riotous laughing and general indiscretion of school-boys who set the place ablaze during this year was no less glamorous, no less appealing than that which passed ten years ago. This was a continuation of the old; this was a carrying on from where their fathers had left off. This road with its dust and bristling hare and mongoose was no less a part of the general scheme of things than the school or the church which was a few miles away. And in the silence which covered and protected it after the din of the busy day one might almost see reflected the simple, unimposing ambitions of the people who trod its surface. The type and nature of the cane plants and well-pits that drained the water; the grass and stumps of trees that hung along the road—all were as intimate and familiar as the hands that tended them. Once the body of a woman, unknown to anyone in the neighbouring village, was found mangled, and some time later a man who had set out for the city by that way never returned. But if the road preserved a secret and dreadful mystery, it never lost its charm. It possessed the indefinable quality of poetry.

At the farthest end of the road, away from St. Christopher's, true signs of the village life were confirmed by the dismal appearance of small houses. These were usually little square buildings resting on huge lime-stones and encircled by neat green fences. About two hundred yards from where the roads converged, the last house stood, cold and solitary. Beyond it stretched a vast expanse of grass and slip, spreading for miles into farther country lands. It looked impressive in its brick outfit. Under the shed that projected from one side, an old man, its only occupant, sucked his clay pipe tranquilly.

His eyes were a dim grey, like the soft hair that covered his head. His face revealed the permanent fatigue of genuine toil, and the little tufts of fat bulging beneath his eyes appeared creased and forsaken. His fingers, gnarled and quavering, clutched desparingly at the bowl of the pipe. He blew the smoke into his eyes and smiled indulgently. Suddenly he jerked his head in the direction of the man who sat beside him.

'Strange 'ow de rec'llection o' de olden times come back!' he said with a smile. He removed his pipe and spat ruthlessly over his shoulder. 'Comin' to t'ink 'pon it,' he went on, 'magine 'ow David Walk is de place it is. Ah remember way back before Breedy put up de ole church 'pon de 'ill, David Walk was not'ing but grass and pebble. Somet'ing to mek me eyeball turn water. Den Jim Warner, Warner at de Cas'le gran'son, speak to de Guvment an' mek see to de people. Gawd bless Warner! 'E was a brick you see 'e. Ah can speak 'cause ah know. But David Walk, de David Walk you see now, is not'in but what ah tell you.'

His companion smiled and looked up pleadingly.

'Comin' to t'ink 'pon it,' the old man began again, 'de people mus' have some kin' o' likin' for dat road. Ah t'ink two or three los' lives when de buildin' was gwine on. It was Sam Kerton, ef de mem'ry serve me good, an' Martha Bes' gawd daughter, Liz, who marry wid Hard Face, los' lives.' He placed his pipe very neatly between his broken teeth and looked askance at his companion. The other was perched on a stool drawing lines in the dust with a piece of stick. He stared at his friend with large, bulging eyes, and occasionally he mumbled, 'Mumph.'

'Of course de children can' know dat now,' the drawling voice echoed. 'Dey romp an' play in de sweat o' we, Gawd bless dem! an' no doubt dey t'ink dat de road was always as it is—David Walk, me own dear David Walk!'

He spoke slowly and deliberately, as would a man who demanded that the full force of his utterances be felt and understood. Often he removed his pipe and rubbed it lazily along his neck before replacing it. His companion was less expressive. He was an earnest and enthusiastic listener, but

wary of speech. He kept nodding his head, and occasionally he made an inexplicable sound by pressing his tongue against the roof of his mouth. That was meant to communicate the intensity of the emotion which was aroused by what he heard. He crossed his thick legs in elegant fashion and sprawled them out again. Sometimes he sat erect and motionless. Often he fingered his pockets and his thighs with long rough hands. But he always manifested keen and sincere attention. His silence contained no element of obsequiousness or embarrassment; only the genuine docility of the young student.

'Comin' to t'ink 'pon it,' the short, talkative one said, 'ow we people walk dat road, so long an' so desolate widdout a murmur o' disagre'bleness. Two an' a 'alf miles. An' de children in de 'an' want to get down an' do some o' de walkin' too. Try all you know you can' understan' how it is. Ah believe we born wid dat road in we. De dus' dat stifle mus' be a tiny part o' de blood dat keep we goin'.'

He sneezed and the mucus shot down his shirt at lightning speed. He wiped it off and continued to speak. 'Not even when de devils did bring de woman wid she body beat up an' de ot'er man who went out for de las' time from we, not even den we did scare o' de road. All de same ah always did t'ink dat de same man who call heself preacher did do dat. We people, black as we is, don' have de killn' spirit in we. More in we lot to tek de punishment an' let de ot'ers go. Comin' to t'ink 'pon it, somebody did tell me dat de man who carry de cross for de Master was a nigger. Up to dis day ah believe it.'

He raised himself slowly out of the wooden seat that supported his back, and stood over his companion with an imperious air. His short, arched body quavering with age and emotion silently predicted that he would soon mingle with the dust that blinded his eyes. The rough, furrowed hands were a piquant symbol of the cruel alliance which time and toil bring to bear on every unfortunate mortal. But he was born into these conditions. He learnt, among many things, the fear of God and the respect of his betters. He had grown up on an estate, cutting grass in the cruel heat of tropical



weather before he had reached his thirteenth year, and every sinew was strengthened and fortified to meet the unpredicted. Had he sunk in those days beneath the oppressive tide of poverty and wrong-doing, he would have indulged the same contentment and pleasure which old age had confirmed. He felt that he was born into his position as a royal personage is born into the abundant splendour of royal things, and he believed fanatically that what he warranted by work and his guiding star could be appropriated by no force on earth. In his simple actions and in the drawling tones that communicated the secret thoughts that niggled at his mind, he embodied the hope and faith of all those who lived around him. He seemed no less a part of that restricted generality than David's Walk seemed a part of himself. He paced to and fro beneath the shed sucking his pipe and waving his hand prophetically in the gathering dusk.

Over the hills the factory lights glimmered faintly through the giant shapes of cloud and smoke, and the fading sounds of horns and iron that clashed struggled despairingly against the wind. Within the factory the hoarse male voices wrestled against the clash of iron and the shrill echo of whistles. The heat was stifling where the cane juice rolled and splashed against the sides of the huge lead cauldrons. The incessant rolling of the engines contributed most effectively to the general confusion within. Outside where the lights cut sharply through the threatening darkness, the faces of men and women shone, gay and triumphant. Above their heads the smoke, curling and expanding, drifted reluctantly from the disturbing cacophony of sound.

Noise and confusion form an essential part of the gaiety of factory work. And there can hardly be a greater and more impressive display of promiscuous fraternity and genuine *esprit de corps* than what is given by those who work shoulder to shoulder in these buildings in which their dreams and ambitions are born. But the factory remains the implacable enemy of quiet.

Through the rolling and wheezing two cronies ambled. Their faces lit up under the splash of light. Each held a cup in one hand and a stick of considerable size in the other.

'Looking fresh as nineteen,' a little boy remarked when they passed. They shot vicious glances and passed on.

They entered a small gate cut out in the wall of the factory and were soon lost in the tortuous muddle of machinery. When they reappeared they were breathing heavily and wiping their lips excitedly. They looked drunk and fatigued from the sudden onslaught of heat and noise.

The two friends walked eastward to where the roads diverged, and after making brief mumbles of farewell, they parted. The light striking fiercely against him who passed behind the factory revealed the features of the little man who sat under the shed talking wildly in the late afternoon. He crossed a high bundle of cane and a steep mound before entering the narrow track that separated cane-fields, and his shadow melted in the darkness. He followed the track wherever it led him, whistling and patting his stick on his leg. He felt for his pipe, but remembered the danger of being caught with fire in such thick fields. He turned to the left and the right as the track inclined, and finally came to an open stretch of rough, unfertile ground. He could see dim and foreboding the outlines of the palms that fringed David's Walk. He entered another track which quickly ended at the brink of the same road. The night was a marvel of blackness, and the croaking of the frogs made him shiver. He lighted a match and the flame glimmered for a second before cowering within the encompassing darkness. The sand and pebble that slipped beneath his feet were a garment he could not recognize. What a terrible blackness, he thought. David's Walk lost in the night.

Standing under his shed again leaning lightly on his stick, he stared at the land that spread itself before him as if he wanted to detect the horizon of the darkness that blinded him. Suddenly he shot a friendly, intimate glance in the direction of David's Walk, and striking a match turned his back upon the night.

## FOR THE PEOPLE OF TRINIDAD

by G. W. LAMMING

They said strange things about you  
Leaving no hope of reconciliation,  
How they fashioned you, shaped you,  
Made you the monster, strengthened my determination  
To hate you more and more.

And then I came to see you for myself,  
Not so much to test you as to confirm  
Their word, to make myself  
Convinced of all they said, and to learn  
To hate you more and more.

And you met me with strange familiarity,  
Cherished me, called me your own  
Until I felt afraid of your hospitality,  
Suspected your gesture and your concern,  
Wanted to fly from you, to hate you more and more.

How I remember you then,  
Obtrusive, indulgent, unyielding  
In your desire to love all men,  
Oblivious to response, stumbling  
Insensibly against their hate.

I could not understand you,  
Not because they had misled me,  
But because of yourself, because you  
Were so happy, so much more happy  
Than they in their hate.

And so I accepted you, yielded  
To your seductiveness,  
Kissed your hand, and needed  
No further word to assure my happiness,  
No other word of their hate.

## POETRY

And now I have come back to them  
To speak for you,  
To defend you, to tell them  
All about you, to guard you  
Against their hate.

I can find no words  
To express your kindness,  
There are no words  
To express my thankfulness,  
I must let them hate.

## THE ROCK

by G. W. LAMMING

We looked on your countenance and found nothing  
That we could recognize, nothing to revive the memory,  
You had lost your tears, offered them back to your lover  
Mended your prodigal ways and returned to your mother.

And now the past was forgotten, the present unheeded to  
Your love had melted within the blue waters that washed  
your shores  
And you had returned, penitent and morose, to your mother,  
For you were a stalemate and could be accepted by no other.

Those fragile weeds that crept upon your shoulders didn't  
understand  
There was nothing you could do for them  
Soon life would be denied them, and they would fall at your  
feet  
Innocent, motherless children whom you could not greet.

And so we wished that time and the age would change  
Your mother would unclasp her arms, grant your will  
Perchance your lover should come back, take your hand  
And make you what you were before, a little island.

# THE BITTER CHOICE

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CLIFFORD W. SEALY

THE oppressive midday heat beat fiercely down upon the withered blades of grass in Woodford Square, the airy sanctuary of the intelligentsia of Port of Spain's unemployed. Unequal groups of ragged, melancholic, and vociferous men and women scattered themselves over the parched tract discussing one subject or another.

In one group the absorbing subject was foreign politics; in another, careful consideration was being given to counsel's submission in a case of murder then being heard; and in a third, was animatedly debated, Government's intervention in the existing water-front workers' strike.

There were as many topics of conversation as there were groups; and these topics were as varied in nature and enormity as were the men who discussed them in character and appearance. In the centre of the Square rose a small, green metal statue, encircled by a wide stone pond that was invariably empty. And facing this pond were six wooden benches whose coat of deep brown paint had long since vanished, exposing the rough yellow pitch-pine.

On one of these benches sat three men. Leo was in the middle. Tall and sturdy, he wore a faded and dirty khaki suit, which, by the vast areas of his arms and legs it left uncovered, gave evidence of an earlier association with a shorter and slimmer owner.

On Leo's right sat Eric. Lean and emaciated, the bones seemed to protrude through his thin, black skin, and a crafty glint shone in his ashen eyes.

Sam completed the triumvirate. Short and slim, he was the least prepossessing, and his opinions always undulated between those of his two comrades.

'Ah hear de Gover'ment want people fur stevedoe work, boys' Eric ventured in a hoarse and insinuating tone.

Leo blew a thick cloud of smoke through his heavy, frog-

like lips. Then, with the tip of the little finger of his right hand he flicked off the grey ash from the end of his cigarette, lightly crushed out the dim, red glow on the iron arm-rest of the bench, brushed away the black cinders and placed the still warm 'zoot' behind his right ear.

He did not speak; nor did Sam, who with lowered head watched his stumpy fingers play with a loose shirt-button.

'Wha' 'appen, now?' growled Eric, injured by this unanticipated silence.

'All yo' en want wuk or what? De Gover'ment gi'ing we wuk, an' all yo' sittin' dong like all yo' proud!'

Leo was angered by Eric's sarcasm; and facing his companion, he shouted with a vehemence born of deep moral conviction.

'We black people en ha' no unity! Anybody who tek dat kine o' wuk want shootin'! Wen de white man ha' 'e business, all o' dem does geh togedder. Buh wen we black people do sometin', de oder set does geh agin dem!'

'We en ha' no unity, dat is wot!' he concluded, turning around again and wiping his oval, unshaven face with the sleeve of his jacket.

'Yo' right, *oui*, Leo! Yo' right, boy!' Sam chimed in uncertainly, 'We black people really en ha' no love fur one anodder. Dat is de real, real trute!'

'Doan mine Leo an' he dam' stupidness, man Sam!' came Eric's admonishing voice, 'he minin' dem politicians an' dere talk!'

'Buh wha' de man say yesterday is true, doe,' Leo put in.

'Wha' he say? Ah wish ah mine dem an' dere talk! Dah en go geh yo' any place!'

Rising from the bench and dusting the seat of his trousers with the palm of his hand, Eric continued, his crooked features contorting themselves into a contemptuous grimace. 'Nigger people too dam' foolish!'

And with a condescending pat on Leo's shoulder, he said as he departed, somewhat with the air of a wizened father to an imprudent son.

'Wha' yo' say is true; buh politics en fur black people. Man ha' to live!'

Leo watched the lanky, half-stooping figure walk down the pathway, and he felt strangely towards him. Eric was de-praved; that he knew. Yet, his words always inspired for themselves a queer respect in Leo's mind.

There was much activity in the Square at this hour. Shop assistants hurried backward and forward, going to and from their lunch. And there were also the shoppers; women, stout and thin, tall and short, with parcels hanging from their arms and gossip clinging to their tongues.

The clock of neighbouring Trinity Cathedral chimed twelve. It reminded Leo that soon he would have to face Mabel, his Grenadian wife. The thought of Mabel sent his mind rolling backwards to the events of the past few days.

Life was hard. Life, he reflected, had never been rosy; now, however, it was coarse and horrid. And Mabel's callousness worsened matters. And slender hope there was of her improving since she had joined the 'In Jesus Mighty Name' sect, a band of misguided poor-people, who each in his distress fancied he had received a 'call' to block the street corners at nights with prayer-meetings.

Returning from her 'lecture' yesterday afternoon, he recalled, she was distressingly hostile.

'Wen yo' go geh uh wuk, Leo?' she had asked him 'Is over uh whole year yo' en wuking! How long yo' tink we could live so?'

'Buh Mabel,' he had reproached her, 'Ah is tryin' me bes'. Some people en wukin' fur years, now.'

'Dat is some people!' she had heatedly exploded, 'buh me is me! Ah can go on livin' like dis, en knowin' wha' ah go eat to-morrow, or wen de man go put we out for he rent, or borrowin' an' en knowin' wen ah go pay back. Dis en go do!'

'Keep courage, doodoo!' he had exhorted her, adding in an effort to mitigate her depression, 'Yo forget is to-morrow ah ha to see de man at de Soap Factory!'

'Sam's squeaky voice drew him out of his meditations.

'Wha' bout de job yo' was to geh dis mornin', Leo? Yo' en tell me nuttin' 'bout it!'

'De foeman cousin dun geh it, man!'

'God-fadder, boy,' understandingly murmured Sam, shaking his odd, round head from left to right, 'Is God-fadder in everyting, *oui*!'

Presently, the number of persons travelling through the Square lessened, and the clouds of dust kicked up by their hasty steps dispersed. Occasionally, a bunch of baked and cracked leaves would lazily float to the ground; while above could be heard the soft kissing of the trees.

Some of the groups broke up; but almost immediately, new ones formed themselves in the same spots. Others, overcome by the scorching glare of the sun sought shelter in the small, concrete bandstand. But the Square, then, as at all times throughout the day, retained its minimum population of fifty idle souls.

'We go see to-morrow, ole man!' said Leo, rising from his seat.

'Oright,' Sam answered.

Soon, Leo arrived at his barrack-room in Duncan Street. Mabel was lying on the small iron bed, her cheap, green spotted dress contrasting picturesquely with the variegated colours of the fibre mattress. In her fat hands, wrinkled by continual laundering reposed an expensively bound, black bible.

Disappointment must clearly have been reflected in his anguished features, for at sight of him, Mabel exclaimed.

'Yo' en geh de job!'

'No!'

'Buh dis is . . .' she burst out, closing her bible and rising to a sitting position.

'Wha' yo' mean by! Ef yo' know yo' can' geh wuk, wha' yo' tek wife for?'

Severely wounded, Leo spluttered, 'Buh, Mabel, ah . . . ah is trying me bes!'

'Yo' tryin' yo' bes!'

she sneered, 'an' how Jane husband wukin' on de Wharf tree days now.'

'He is uh dog, yo' see! growled Leo, getting up from the



small wooden bench on which he sat, and which together with a dully varnished bureau and a rectangular dining table comprised the entire household furniture.

'Ah en want no wuk so! He . . .

'Oh-ho, yo' pickin' an' choosin'! she snarled, burying the knuckles of her fingers deeply into her sides.

'Yo' minin' dem Unions an' dere politics! Ah see! Is pride dat have yo' goin' so.'

'It en pride. Is education. Education like de people in . . .'

'Education wot. Education could mine yo'?'

'Yo en understan' . . .'

'Ah understan' well. Yo en really want wuk. But ah en livin' wid no man who en want to wuk an min' he wife. Ah en any 'oman yo' pick up an' yo' ha' to mine me.'

And with an air of dramatic finality, she added, 'ef yo' en want to mine me, ah go do it meself.'

'Wha' 'appen?'

'Ah very calm! Mabel replied, her beady black eyes glistening with defiance, 'buh ef yo' en mine me, oder people go do it.'

'Go to hell!' he shouted, tumbling out of the room.

A huge and excited crowd had gathered in Prince Street. Men and women stood in the streets and on the pavements noisily speaking to each other. Some of them wore on their sleeveless arms bands of various colours, some held in their hands small galvanized buckets filled with water or cane-baskets filled with food; others waved in the air small cardboard placards splashed with bold red.

To Leo there was an infectious exultancy that seemed more indigenous to a Carnival sailor-band. He marvelled at the ease with which they fell into the military march and the unrestrained zeal with which they swung their banners.

As though to accentuate the incongruity of the assemblage there stood at the head a few smartly dressed men, sporting expensive ties.

'Dem is big shots!' Leo thought to himself. 'Dem en stevedoes!'

Then the ungainly crowd began to move, and Leo found himself involuntarily moving with them. The indistinct babbling ceased. Placards rose high in the air and voices shouted to the heavens.

Starting at first in the front, the song swiftly spread through the serried throng like a summer fire in a dense forest.

'Sing comrade, sing!' a burly, bare-footed picket commanded Leo, shoving him against the back of a formidable looking *marchande*.

The street reverberated with the shuffling of their steps and the sound of their voices as bass blended with soprano into one soul-gripping symphony.

'Hold the fort for we are coming  
Union men be strong'.

The words which came rapidly to Leo found a dim echo deep within his breast which as he marched and sang rose to a choking crescendo.

He stumbled out of the demonstration and stood to regain his breath at the corner of Prince and Henry Streets. Many persons were standing on the pavements and one of these he heard comment to another.

'If they would only maintain this solidarity, they'll surely win!'

He turned around and perceived the speaker to be a tall, neatly clothed and bespectacled youth with a neat tuft of beard concealing his chin. For a moment his eyes were imprisoned by the glare of the man's shining pair of shoes; and he could not resist a cynical chuckle as he looked at his dirty, red-spotted alpagarthas through whose narrow mouths his unwashed toes protruded.

His soul became enmeshed in a disturbing emotional conflict. Thoughts of Mabel, her threat; of Eric, his remarks, of his hunger; of the leaders of the demonstration; of the teacher; of the strike, and of his now unendurable and apparently purposeless existence were all in some curious way united in his brain.

Down Henry Street he walked, away from the multitude, away from the contagious joy which reminded him of himself,

away, away. Vaguely as through a mist he saw and avoided the cars and carts that obstructed his route.

Eventually he reached South Quay. A line of men were standing in front of a large, wooden building. Even this sight did not inspire him with hope. He was too weak. Yet he did not stop to ask any questions but drew instinctively closer to the line.

'Psst, Leo!' came a hoarse, familiar whisper, 'Look uh room in here!'

Spinning around, his face flushed for a moment. He hesitated. He turned to leave. But before he could move, Eric's long hand gripped him.

'Come yo' young fool, come in here befoe yo' lose yo' chance!'

For one deep, significant moment, Leo resisted Eric's tugging. He seemed totally paralysed as his contradictory thoughts revolved in one maddening, ever-narrowing circle. He felt them racing to a challenging climax. And when it came, he chose.

Squeezing himself behind Eric, he hardly heard the latter covetously whisper to him, 'Is tree dollars uh day de Gover'ment gi'ing we. Nigger people too dam' foolish.'

'Uh-huh!' was Leo's sole, laconic reply.

# JAMMET-'OMAN

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CLIFFORD W. SEALY

**A**SILENCE as oppressive as the bright midday sun hung over Scorpion Yard. There was absent the usual Sunday morning ribaldry when the male inhabitants of this slum hole noisily narrated their lewd experiences of the night before. Even the rustling of the leaves in the September wind was scarcely heard, and the mangy dogs failed to bark at the unceasing stream of visitors. A pantomime took place as Annie and Ma Corbeau communicated with each other by means of glances, shakes of the head, and movements of the limbs.

Perched upon the stump of a coconut tree, blown down by the hurricane of '34, Ma Corbeau looked over her short, white clay pipe at Tiger Joe, a malignant smile playing on her thin, cracked lips. She was the oldest resident of the Yard, and to her the neighbours turned like helpless infants to a mother for the interpretation of their dreams and cures for their maladies. Like the traditional medicine-man of an African tribe, she exerted a powerful influence over the minds of her flock.

'Eh-eh, Ma Corbeau, what happening, to-day?' laughingly inquired Annie, the washer-woman, 'why we so quiet, nuh?'

Removing the pipe from between her black, toothless gums, Ma Corbeau, the smile still hovering on her lips, gave an enigmatic reply.

'Hmmp, she grunted, spitting out a brown saliva, 'is Jammet-'Oman to-day, chile. I dream it las' night.'

'Ca . . . ca . . . ca . . . Jammet-'Oman,' vulgarly repeated Annie, as a cackle broke from her thick, sensual lips, causing her body to quiver like the chord of a bass-cello.

Spreading around the yard, this cackle brought a voluptuous warmth where a moment ago there was an austere and repelling silence. Tiger Joe made a vain attempt to capture the threads of this joy, but his brain seemed impervious to every sensation other than the monotonous pounding of the wooden pestle in the small mortar.

For nearly one week his naive mind had been grappling with a problem that as yet defied solution, and for a corresponding period, he had discerned a strangeness in the behaviour of his two neighbours, Annie and Ma Corbeau. Always avidly discussing the affairs of a neighbour, their esoteric conversations had never intrigued him. However, there was now greater secrecy surrounding their meetings and deeper eagerness manifested itself in their tones.

A queer feeling gripped him as he sensed the stare of Ma Corbeau upon him. Several times for the morning, he had raised his head to encounter the immovable gaze of the old lady. A strange glint shone in her ashen eyes which burned despite her years, and drew him to her in the same inexplicable manner in which the candle-light attracts the moth. He shook his head, as though ridding himself of a disgusting thought; and bending his short, muscular frame over the mortar, he pounded away with greater rapidity.

The intervals between the upward and downward movements shortened. His hand moved as quickly as that of a drummer, and he pounded away with a growing frenzy as though crushing a sinister influence out of his mind. He continued pounding until the brown sweat trickled down his glistening forehead and into his tired eyes.

Temporarily blinded, he stopped. He let go of the pestle and sat down on a small soap-box while he wiped the perspiration off his face with a heavy, hairy hand. Why was the old hag staring him so, he wondered? Could it be possible that she had guessed the cause of his torment? One couldn't trust these old people, especially Ma Corbeau who had Yoruba blood in her veins.

It was last Sunday morning that he had put out Mabel with whom he had lived for the past nine years, and in the afternoon, Jean, a slim, beautiful East Indian of about twenty-two years became his mistress. Since that day, however, certain feelings had intermittently possessed him. At first, they perplexed him. But now he understood them, as they had formed themselves into a sensation of regret.

From the second day, he had begun to compare Jean with Mabel, and by the fourth he had acknowledged his mistake.

Firstly, Mabel was a stronger woman than Jean. His stiff shirt-collars and her survival after nine years of flogging testified to that. Secondly, Jean was no cook. And were Mabel here to-day, he would not have been sweating over this confounded 'pound-plantain'.

True, Jean was younger and prettier; but what were youth and beauty when balanced against proper food and clean clothes. He couldn't afford to like a woman for her looks, however attractive she might be; he had to measure a woman by her domestic usefulness. And by this standard, Mabel certainly surpassed Jean.

Moreover, Jean's very youth and charm brought to him certain disadvantages. For was it not true that Ralphie, the famed 'Whe-Whe' banker had been visiting the Yard more frequently than before. What could have persuaded this slum prince to visit Scorpion Yard? What else . . . he thought. The answer to that question, he reluctantly believed, now stood before his door, ineptly straining a pot of rice. For some few minutes he gazed greedily at the nymph-like form, clothed in a tight-fitting and revealing red dress, and the long, jet-black hair that fell thickly upon slender shoulders.

Another pair of eyes were also gazing at that beautiful figure; but in Ma Corbeau's eyes, Tiger Joe perceived not admiration, but flaming contempt. And he was puzzled for a while until he remembered that Ma Corbeau was Macomere to Mabel's sister and was therefore taking up 'fire-rage' for Mabel.

Resting his hands upon his knees, he looked across at the grizzled hair of the old woman which was partly hidden by her white head-tie

'Ma Corbeau,' he searching began, pausing to note the interest which his address was receiving 'I have a question to put to yuh.'

Ma Corbeau did not immediately answer. Instead, she placidly puffed at her pipe and gazed at the hard, one might say cruel, features of her neighbour, as though lost in sympathetic reflection upon the skill of the craftsman who had fashioned him.

'Yuh is a big, experienced 'oman,' Tiger continued, 'an' yuh could give me a good advise.'

'Twa!' Ma Corbeau spat contemptuously on the ground in the direction of the kitchen where Jane was busy fanning the fire, a gesture which was not lost on Joe

'I want Mabel back!' he burst out.

'Eh-heh!' she listlessly replied.

'And I want yuh to help me,' he continued.

'Me!' The exclamation was loud and sharp. 'Me!' she repeated 'But look at me trouble, nuh.'

'Oh God, Ma Corbeau, don't get on so, nuh,' he begged. 'Only yuh could help me.'

'Who say so?'

'Yuh know is true, everybody does obey yuh.'

'Well, yes,' she agreed, pleased with the flattery.

'But yuh tink Mabel go come back after de way yuh treat she. Nuh, boy, 'oman is a funny nation.'

'I know all that, Ma Corbeau,' he confessed, 'but is only one word from you, an' everything fix.'

'Hmmp!' she made her characteristic grunt. 'And what 'bout *dat* in the kitchen?' she asked with a disdainful toss of her wiry head towards Jane.

'Not so loud!' he cautioned, 'I don't know yet!'

'Yuh don't know!' she demanded. 'Well, she have to go. Two 'oman can' live wid yuh She have to go. Yuh here me. She have to go.'

'Yes, ole lady,' Joe whispered weakly, 'but I can' put she out so, after all.'

Ma Corbeau was silent. Once more the wicked smile played upon her cracked lips. The veteran spat again and rose from her seat on the stump. Her eyes were aflame with the intensity of a diabolical suggestion which had come to her. Joe read the glint in her eyes and trembled

Dropping himself on his knees, he pleaded, afraid that if Ma Corbeau forsook him now, all was lost.

'Ma Corbeau, Ma Corbeau,' he intoned, 'beg she to come back, beg she fur me. She is bong to lisen to yuh. Fur my sake.'

But the old woman's protracted tutelage in the hard, exacting school of life had rendered her immune to pathos, and in a cold, even voice, she dictated her terms.

'Dhat,' indicating Jean with another vigorous spit, 'tek way Mabel man an' mek she shame. Mabel have to get back she respect. She mus' mak she shame, too.'

'Yes!'

'Yuh mus' let Mabel collar yuh in front of de whole yard, an' wen that thing there see the way tings is she go run.'

There was a silence Tiger Joe thought for a moment. What the old lady had said was true enough. But he couldn't let Mabel or any woman collar him. And not in private, he thought, but in front of the whole yard. He could never go back to Manoel's rumshop. The boys would never forget this. Moreover, once a man gave a woman an inch, she took a nail. The proposition was not one acceptable to him.

'Ma Corbeau,' he stammered, 'yuh don't. . . .'

'All right, chile,' the old lady interrupted him as she strode off, 'yuh don't want she back. Yuh like young. . . .'

'Wait,' he cried out, pulling at her dress, 'wait, nuh. Give a man chance to think.'

'Think!'

The seriousness of the situation seized him as he struggled to conquer his pride. And while this conflict raged within him, thoughts came to him of Mabel's strength; his poverty; Ralphie's affluence. To allow a woman to collar him was bad enough; but, perhaps another and greater humiliation awaited him. And he had to choose between the two. It was better to give the horn than to take one.

'Look, leh go me dress, man.'

'Is oright,' he capitulated, 'I go do as yuh say.'

In a room not far distant, three women conversed in subdued, though excited tones. A tension enveloped them which even the strong morning air could not dispel. Mabel, a plump matronly lump of humanity, reclined on the bed, her coal-black skin contrasting sharply with the clear white of the counterpane, while her eyes roved between the anxious faces of Annie and Doris.

'She coming!' Annie shrilled.

Mabel jumped off the bed and struggled with Doris and Annie for the honour of opening the door. At length, entered



the panting Ma Corbeau whose ashen eyes now shone with triumph.

'Is oright,' she assured them, sliding into a rocking-chair. 'We got 'im. Is scandal fur so. Jes as we say.'

'He couldn't las' a day again,' she boasted, 'I is too ole in dis ting, chile. Too ole!'

'Ca . . . ca . . . ca . . . ' the familiar cackle of Scorpion Yard emitted from the person of Annie, terrifying the room with its coarseness. 'They say man smarter dun 'oman; but is 'oman smarter dun man.'

'Is Jammet-'oman, in trute Dat is de mark to-day!' she continued, as she burst out in her cackle once more 'Ca . . . ca . . . ca . . . '

## ROAD-MENDING

by BARNABAS J. RAMON-FORTUNÉ

Patches of black  
In the pitch  
Make the most  
Unusual patterns:  
Irregular blocks,  
Birds' wings,  
Shapes of ships,  
Animals' heads,  
Curiously  
Inter-figured.

This is the  
Road-mender's art:  
With tar and gravel  
To design  
A dozen or more  
Shapes and figures;  
To figure out  
From fancy only  
How to inlay  
Gravel and tar.

# IN DUST AND DIRT

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WILLY RICHARDSON

TUESDAY night, and the Order of Mimelech was holding its meeting at the corner of Park and Charlotte Streets. It was a very busy corner. Trams kept passing every few minutes with their irritating clatter. Buses and taxis tooted derisive horns. On both sides of Charlotte Street by the flickering yellow light of their flambeaux, marchands offered trays of fruit, oranges, bananas, coconuts, for the crowds who frequented this part of the city, the shortest route for the swarm of people who crawled to and from Belmont.

The Brethren, in full regalia, stood on the pavement under the drug store. Advertisements for cough mixtures and pain killers screamed their warnings from the closed doors. The women were dressed in white, with white kerchiefs on their heads. The men, a minority as usual, wore their Sunday best, the ubiquitous blue serge suits. On the left a standard bearer held a shepherd's crook in his hand and his companion on the right leaned on the straight, long, polished pole with the ringed cross of brass at the end.

The Chief Prophet, a thin, wizened, red-skinned man, declared: 'We will begin with a hymn. Sister Mary will lead.' Sister Mary sang in a loud, strident voice 'Come into the Light of Glory'. Voices swelled around her, dragging the lines out with long and passionate devotion. As they sang they clapped their hands to keep time and swayed their bodies from side to side, their eyes turned upward, with the vacant expression of visionaries.

On the outskirts of the crowd stood Sarah Greaves, a fat black woman with a weatherbeaten face, which showed courage and endurance and yet defeat. She had no use for the Brethren. She was only there because her son was one of the Prophets and was to speak to-night. Her mind was far away from the proceedings. It was wandering into the past, worrying

about her only son. 'Ah wonder what Me-Henry see in all this nonsense,' she thought.

Me-Henry, Sarah had called her son with proprietary interest since he was a small boy and the inexorable years that had changed so much had never broken this habit. She had always considered her boy wonderful, but to others Henry had appeared vaguely distinguishable from other little boys. With them he had spent many hours pitching tops, or flying kites with long tails of cloth lined with razor-sharp zwill, or running jockeys, the small bits of oval shaped wood in the murky gutters of the town. These the boys had named after the famous race-horses of the time, and for stakes they used pins, pins taken from old dresses, pins taken from shirt fronts, rusty pins, bright steel pins. Then hour after hour they had chased down the street, following the fortunes of their jockeys, whipping their fingers and crying 'Come on Houghton! Take him Sailor!'

At that time Sarah was a domestic servant; it had been difficult to keep check of Henry but whenever she caught him playing she would drive him indoors with a stern reprimand: 'Go and read you' book, suh. Ah has no intention of havin' a vagabond in the family. The late Mr. Greaves, Gawd rest his soul, was a decent man. So you best had mind you' steps or ah go forget me baptismal vows and gi' you such a fleet o' blows, that you wouldn' be able to sit down.'

She remembered how disappointed Henry had been when he had missed an exhibition and had to leave school. She had taken him to the priest to ask what Henry could do now that it was time for him to go to work. Father O'Connell, the chubby red-faced Irishman, with his rounded paunch, twinkling eyes, and a loud lilting voice, patted Henry's head. 'So it's time for the little man to work, is it?' he boomed. 'I was out at an early age meself. He should be thinking of getting himself a trade. It's a good thing to be able to read and write, but too much education is bad for the faith. It makes us doubt. Get Henry apprenticed to a carpenter or better still a shoemaker. Shoes are getting popular these days. Remember, Henry, to work is to pray, and that reminds me. How would you like to be an acolyte. I could do with another.'

'Me-Henry an acolyte, Father?' Sarah said astounded, her eyes glistening with pride. The priest had nodded.

'Where yo' manners, boy? Say thanks to Father.'

Henry had gone to many ceremonies as an acolyte. Sometimes Sarah had taken time off from her work to watch Henry in his long robe, his head bowed in devotion, swinging the censer gracefully from side to side as he walked in front of a funeral procession. But one thing Sarah had found queer. After leaving school Henry had studied harder than ever. His nose was forever in a book. Books on religion, on history, on politics. Henry seemed to have no other desire than to read. So Henry had grown to manhood repairing shoes, swinging a censer, and reading.

Sarah remembered how shocked she had been that day when Henry had told her 'I'm leaving the Church.'

'You gone mad, boy!'

'No, I don't agree with its teaching. There's too much form, not enough feeling. I'm joining the Brethren!'

'Look me trouble, nah! Me-Henry want to become a way-side Preacher.'

'Christ was a way-side preacher.'

'Don't blaspheme in me house, boy!'

But Sarah had not been able to dissuade Henry. At that time he had been a tall, well-knit young man. A long and keenly chiselled face, with high cheek-bones. His hair long, and combed straight back from his forehead. Fierce black eyes. He hadn't long been with the Brethren before they realized that he was their best preacher. Unlike the other prophets, he had no difficulty in getting a crowd to gather at a street corner. His clear ringing voice, his fearless personality had attracted even those who were hostile to the sect.

On the pavement the new members were about to testify, and Sarah's reverie was interrupted as a young woman stepped forward and in a high-pitched, nervous voice began to tell the litany of her sins. At every pause the women around her groaned in commiseration.

'I was on the streets livin' a bad life. I used to do everybody bad, because my heart was evil. All I wanted was dancin' and

spreecin' and pretty dresses to put on. I knew I were doin' wrong but I didn't care. Then I got dipped. Now life is different. Now I am cleansed and purified and blest with the spirit of love.'

She was followed by the reading of long passages from the Bible by one of the younger attendants who were in training to become Prophets.

Then Henry stepped forward. He wore a long white robe sweeping to the sandals on his feet. He stood in silence for a moment, his head bowed; suddenly, throwing out his arms, he addressed the crowd fervently:

'Brethren, to-day is the day. Now is the time to cast off your terrible sin from you and stand in new humility before the almighty wrath of your Maker. Now is the time to look down inside you and realize your power. You stand there like cowering beasts. You are not beasts. You are men. Here before me, as I speak, there may be one greater than the great Ezekiel. Here there may be another Daniel. You are men who can make history if you accept the inheritance that your Maker has given you. But no! you tremble with fear, you make obeisance to man and the things of man. You worship the hideous idols of wealth, ambition, lust, hypocrisy, and when you are condemned to the hell which you so justly deserve, you whimper with craven hearts.'

While he spoke many grunts of agreement came from the crowd, but when he stopped there was a long hush. And then in the distance they heard the sound of steel. 'Hell-Yard' was coming down from the bridge. The loud vibrant rhythm of the steel instruments drowned all other sound. The kittle-beaters had got the swing, and the Brethren knew that their meeting was over. Park Street pulsated with the elemental music. Now the bugles were blasting a challenge to the night air, to the police, to the rest of Trinidad. The Steel Band swung down Charlotte Street and the crowd followed.

The Chief Prophet told the Brethren: 'The Devil is out again to-night. The meeting is over.'

Sarah was glad. She went up to Henry: 'Ay, son, you still usin' all those big words.'

Henry looked at her gravely: 'How you keeping, Ma?'

'Better than you, son. You look as if you stop eatin'. Yo' face so thin.'

'I'm all right, Ma.'

'Why don' you stop all this preachin.' You gettin' old before yo' time.'

'Don't worry about me, Ma '

'I must worry. You think it please me to see me big son walkin' about the place in a long nightgown. Why you don' go back and ask Father O'Connell to forgive you. I hear you does say some hard things about the Church.'

Henry waved his hands impatiently.

'What I say is the truth. They represent organized hypocrisy, they are the servants of mammon. Father O'Connell is a fat, stupid, both-sides old man who doesn't give two damns so long as his belly is full '

'Hush, Henry I wouldn' have you to say nothin' against Father. He is the best man we ever had up there. And he likes you, too. Only the other day he was askin' me for you, and I was too shame to tell him what you doin'.'

'Well, Ma, I have something to tell you. I am going to start my own Church.'

Sarah recoiled, dismay twisting her face. 'Don' say such things!'

'I'm serious,' Henry said. 'To-night I'm going to proclaim it to the Brethren when the inner circle of Prophets meets.'

Sarah shook her head, clucking her tongue against the roof of her mouth. 'Ah hope you come to you' senses before it too late, son,' and left him with his plans for building a church.

Henry had by now seen the impossibility of making any headway declaiming from street corners, shouting to make himself heard above the din of traffic. It was essential that he have his own church. He would get far more people to listen, and the church itself would be a symbol of his message.

At the meeting, the Brethren were sceptical from the start. The Chief Prophet pooh-poohed the idea. 'Where you think you goin' to get money to build a Church It don't cost six cents to build a church. As it is our collection is too small. Brother Henry, look inside your heart and make sure that you haven' fallen before the idol of ambition.'

Henry jumped to his feet and began to pace the room agitatedly. He turned to the Chief Prophet fiercely. 'What use it is to bawl at the idlers who stand around you more from curiosity than anything else. If we had our own place, we'd soon know how much our message means. Let us have meetings every night. By the Bridge, at the Quarry, on the green in Piccadilly Street. Tell the people what we want, and ask them to give extra. Build the Church ourselves, with our own hands.'

The Chief Prophet shook his head. 'Brother Henry, you is a lost man. We don' business with Churches. People will sit on the seats and go to sleep. You can' sleep standing up. And remember what the good book says, "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in My name there am I in the midst of them".'

Henry blazed out at him: 'If you are not worthy enough to erect a temple to your Maker I have no right with you. You are too blind to see the fire by night or the smoke by day. I will do it alone!'

The Chief Prophet's wide nostrils distended angrily as he shouted: 'Beware! Beware! The Brethren will denounce you as a renegade!'

'Denounce!' Henry answered him. 'Look who's talking. When Sister Freda came to tell you that her daughter was sick, what did you do? Told her to send the girl for a bath which you would personally purify. And when the girl died of pneumonia, all you could say was "she didn't have enough faith!"; Denounce, and be damned!'

Henry left the room, his robe swishing around his legs as he strode out, his eyes smouldering with anguish at the ignorance of the Chief Prophet.

From that night Henry devoted himself to the task of persuading whoever he could to help him build the Church. He went to all the accustomed meeting-places unattended and preached his vision of a Church that would belong to the poor and hopeless, a church that would know nothing of class or colour distinction, a church that would give men a reason for living, which would make them forget the squalor and grime of their daily existence. Crowds flocked to hear his passionate

zeal. At the end of a meeting he would pick up the cents and pennies which had been thrown at his feet. With the help of his more loyal supporters, he began to build the church. Some of them brought wood, cement, nails, and together they laid down the foundation on the hill he had chosen.

But the Chief Prophet had not threatened in jest. At every meeting he would warn the Brethren not to listen to the heresies that Henry was preaching. Many of them who had been ready to help Henry now wondered if they had not made a mistake. Night after night the Chief Prophet insisted that Henry was mad. He had a fiery, spluttering delivery, gesticulating as he spoke, 'Brother Henry is tryin' to lead you like blind swine over de cliff. Don' say ah didn' warn you. Is not a little mad he mad. You ever hear 'bout a man in his senses want to build a Church! He ain' got a house to sleep in but is a church he want to build! Remember ah did warn you 'bout Brother Bosanquet, he was forever sayin' that motor-cars are the Devil's chariots, but when he win the sweepstake and buy his own car, he forget all-you. Go say you helpin' crazy Henry. Ah bet you he leave all you in the half. Let him build his Church himself!' The Chief Prophet ranted on, screaming out his abuse of Henry.

Many wavered in their loyalty to Henry. They wondered if the Chief Prophet wasn't right. Henry looked like a lunatic as he walked the streets during the day when the city went about its noisy mechanical business. His matted, uncombed hair, his bushy beard, his long, dirty robe, attracted attention, but it was the attention of curiosity and derision. The Chief Prophet had declared him mad, the Brethren regarded him as mad. Henry preached to dwindling audiences, he walked up the hill to build his Church and none came to help him.

Henry sat on an unfinished pillar of concrete and stared out at the muddy sea, brooding. What could he do? Go back and tell the Chief Prophet that he had repented? Or make his peace with Father O'Connell? Or return to his old job making shoes, take off his prophet's robe and live quietly with his mother?

Henry has not yet made up his mind what he will do. He still wears his long robe and walks the streets of Port-of-Spain



ragged and unkempt. He sleeps on pavements, under trees, in the squares. Often children follow him, jeering:

'Prophesy! Prophesy!  
Who will live and who will die!'

But Henry takes as little heed of them as he does of the rest of the world. And on the hill, the foundations of his church remain, the abandoned testimony of one man's attempt to reach out and touch the stars.

## THE UNRETURNING

by C. L. HERBERT

Chiseled from the marble of memory  
Of the unreturning rapture of youthful days  
But impalpable and indistinct  
As shadows in a legend of moonlight  
The image of an early lover appears  
And from the old crone's lips cries drip:  
'Time was he was my lover.  
I found him all fire, fire that burned  
Through the flesh to the core of my being,  
But he spoke in strange idiom  
Of roses wrought in flame  
And of insidious sunshine  
That soon would kiss each rose  
Into perpetual darkness,  
And I, through pride, pretended perception.  
O wherefore was I proud and why  
Did they, the ancient women and anxious men  
Who through his veins ran frantic,  
Why did they hate me thus who now,  
A monument of antique bone,  
Grown cold and by my lover beguiled,  
Wail through the intimate dark  
Though stone-deaf ears hear not my cries?'

POETRY

SONG

by C. L. HERBERT

Night's end and bird song. Bright birds,  
All through the morn from the child's waking hour,  
From perches high in, with cascades of chords,  
Drenched the leafy dew-starred hair of trees.  
When the gradual, vivid dawn was done  
The filigree of dew drops disappeared,  
Bird song of the past was blurred  
And fumbling the hairless trees  
Came time's haze of dust-laden years  
Which makes future and past so vague,  
And also came the fear that stunned  
The fear that I'd grown into stone.  
But to-day, bright thoughts have scoured the brain  
And I try for the happy words  
To express my hope, large as the sun,  
That violent as the poui  
Which explodes into flowers when earth is cast iron  
I shall rend my veil of fears  
And burst into song with the radiant tongue  
Of the birds, in the trees, in the dawn.

THE FISHERMEN

by G. W. LAMMING

And now the lamp's light threatens to go out for ever,  
And we are left with nothing to do but fold up our papers  
and whisper our prayers  
And wait until the other light slips from the rim of day  
To bring fresh life into these shingled rooms.

Night falls  
And with it falls  
The sea's sharp tang  
And the pungent rawness

## POETRY

Of the sea's brittle eggs  
We know no more  
Goodnight, Peter, goodnight, Arthur,  
Goodnight, boys, goodnight.

We may flick the shutters and curtain ourselves from the night,  
Dispose of the empty bottles and cleave to our sheets,  
But how shall we look upon the darkened weeds that festoon  
our shores ?  
Or whisper the final word to the broken vessels that house  
our souls ?

Night must fall  
And with it all  
The intrusive traffic  
Of the boisterous, briny day  
Lopping a thousand scars  
That leave unveiled  
The sacred freshness  
Of our dessicated bones.

And here one perceives the great division,  
The bold, illusive fissure that makes of body and soul an alien  
twin,  
Here in this lore-neglected village that feeds on fish  
Whence men of ruthless language speed to slake the thirst of fish  
And where dark women hold perpetual vigil on the silver  
sands,  
Body and soul in belligerent disunity have met,  
And the hand that paints brute malice on the rugged oar  
Waves its affection to those who guard the shore.

## FOREST HILLS

by G. W. LAMMING

There is a mountain of fear in a backward glance  
And secret dells of wonder cleave like magnet  
To the traveller's trepid step.  
Look where human strength silly as a child

## POETRY

That blows faint bugles in the dying fire  
Has eaten its way across the sinister blades of grass  
And the pale, corroding print of human feet  
Has mapped a track for those who feel adventure  
Bob and weave about their finger-tips.

But, follow, O stranger, follow  
Those tracks that move with painful, twisted ease  
Like snakes whose courage is built upon a venomous lust for  
blood,

Cling to your strength and tread upon the line of scars  
Made here by human feet Follow, O stranger, follow,  
And you shall feel fear in the touch of a leaf.  
Sprawled upon the lawn in the coolness of an April evening,  
The sun half-hidden between the leaves, and the wash of the  
waves

Chanting your freedom to the sun-stained rocks,  
You look upon the tangled network of these hills  
And let your fancy play at hide and seek  
Around the unordered mystery that dwells beneath their  
greenery.

But, follow, O stranger, follow  
The tracks heaving and limping like a crutched figure,  
Muffle your fear and slip defenceless as a dove  
Within the foliage that waits upon you  
Like the silence of a bramble-net.  
Close the eyes and let the sunlight filter through the lids  
Until the leap that quickens your blood  
Becomes the steadied rhythm of a forest pool.  
And when the wind comes waltzing through the leaves  
That form a shroud about your fear  
You'll hear the brittle tunes that make  
The crackling music of forest fires

# FOREST SCENE

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EDGAR MITTELHÖLZER

THE man was returning from the hills. He had spent the whole afternoon hunting, but had met with no success. He was a man of about forty-two. On his head was a dirty, misshapen sun-helmet with a hole in the top where a button-plug had once been fixed. His clothes were stained with the red dirt of the hills; he wore shorts of a washed-out blue and a khaki shirt threadbare at the shoulders and frayed at the tops of the pockets. His gait was leisurely and indeterminate as though the air of pondering on his olive, weathered face influenced the movements of his legs. He carried his rifle at the slope, and with his free hand occasionally plucked off a leaf from a tree and crumbled it. His heavy boots made crunching noises amidst the fallen leaves, and once or twice the iron blakey on a heel would clink sharply against a pebble.

It was late afternoon, and the sunshine that filtered through the trees was of a ruby tint. Now and then a lizard rustled, and now and then an insect made a brittle clicking. These and the crunchings of the man's boots were the only sounds. The air smelt alternately of dry leaves and earth and of woodsmoke. A hill-fire was burning in the north-east. The smell came and went as the wind veered.

Once the man faltered to a halt and turned his face slightly upward, sniffing the air. An expression of pleasurable reminiscence appeared in his eyes and on his lips; his eyes narrowed, tiny wrinkles forming around them; his lips, which were rather thick and negroid, widened. His body quivered, as though whatever memory it was that had come to life in him were so intense in its nostalgia that it tortured him to contain it. After a moment he shook his head and grunted harshly, jolting himself, it seemed, back to the reality of the present and finding the return bitter and painful.

Presently he entered a belt of cocoa trees and in a few

minutes had emerged into a clearing in which stood a wooden cottage. It was a fairly large place, paint-worn and with an air of decay and desertion. There must have been a time when it had felt a pride in itself, for the windows and eaves were ornate with fretwork of the elaborate style favoured by the Spanish and French creoles of Trinidad a century or so ago. It was raised on ten- or twelve-foot wooden and concrete pillars and the lower part was enclosed by lattice-work overgrown with a dense tangle of honeysuckle and correllita

The clearing was dry and dusty from the prolonged drought and barren of a single blade of grass. The blue-grey marble slabs of three tombs, one of them half-buried and at a slant, could be seen not more than thirty or forty yards from the kitchen-end of the cottage which was toward the west. The trunks of two coconut palms and a cabbage palm threw shadows along the red earth—brown shadows that headed for the cottage, turning grey as they climbed up the walls and blue-grey as they moved up the slope of the corrugated iron roof. The cabbage palm made a straight shadow, but the shadows of the coconut palms were bent and irregular, a trifle sinister, as though they might portend some unmentionable tragedy.

Going toward the kitchen-end of the cottage, the man quickened his pace. His face grew less pensive; a tenseness and expectancy took the place of the pensiveness.

A woman was sitting on the shaky stairway that led up to the kitchen. Her features were more negroid than the man's, though her complexion was fairer, sallow like a Portuguese or Spanish complexion. Her hair was reddish and kinky. She was a woman of about twenty-five, well developed and flagrantly female. She wore a pale green cotton dress, and sitting easily on the stairs, her chin resting on her clenched hands which, in turn, rested, one on top the other, on her knees, seemed to give off an effluvium of sexuality. Without altering her position, she glanced at the man and asked him whether he had got anything, her tone revealing only vague interest.

The man made no reply, though he gave her a prolonged stare. He had come to a stop. He shifted his gaze over to the

boy—a black boy of about eighteen who was chopping firewood near an outshed situated about fifty yards from the cottage. He was stripped to the waist, and his muscular torso seemed to shiver with virility every time the axe descended.

He paused once and returned the man's look, then went on with his task, though his eyes gleamed with what was evidently fear.

The man moved past him at a quick, excitable pace to the door of the outshed which stood ajar. He pulled the door wide open and made a cursory survey of the old boxes and tools and implements which were piled haphazard inside before letting his gaze come to rest on the crude mattress which lay on the floor between a broken packing-case and a heap of shovels and rakes. It was a dirty mattress, and here and there some of the stuffing protruded from rents in the cloth. On it a pinkish blanket, also dirty-looking, rested in crumpled folds. This was where the black boy slept.

The man bent and whisked aside the blanket. His gaze moved searchingly over the mattress for a while, then stopped. What he saw, or thought he saw, made him tremble. His mouth twitched. A choked grunting noise rasped in his throat. He straightened up and turned, his face greyish under the sunburnt olive. He stared at the boy.

The boy had stopped chopping the logs. Leaning on the axe, he stared back at the man. Defiance now accompanied the fear in his eyes. His muscles gleamed in the reddish sunshine that came over the top of the forest. His throat moved as though he were gulping to steel himself for conflict. The deep brown tint of his skin gave him an intensified air of virility. He was like a sandbox sapling aware of distant thunder but confident of its ability to bear up when the storm comes overhead.

The woman came down the stairs and walked out into the clearing. She seated herself on a shaly boulder not far from the tombs. The shadow of one of the two coconut palms touched her feet; she was bare-footed. Her manner was more amused than anxious; she seemed interested neither one way nor another, as though she were outside and above anything so degrading as a clash between two male human beings. Her

mien implied that she would be ready to cherish the survivor, man or boy; it mattered nothing to her.

The man told the boy to drop the axe.

The boy obeyed. It was an obedience that habit had evidently bred.

The man told the boy to walk over to the coconut tree. He pointed with his rifle to the palm which grew a little way beyond the tombs—the palm whose shadow was touching the woman's feet.

The boy obeyed—without hesitation—but his manner was sullen and still defiant.

At the order from the man to climb the tree the boy did not move.

The woman laughed softly.

The man asked the boy if he was not going to climb. He reminded him of what he had warned him when he had taken him on to work a few weeks ago. He must climb, or . . . He left the threat unspoken but slapped the butt of his rifle with a significance that could not be misconstrued.

The boy shifted his feet about, but made no move to climb.

The man looked at the woman, and his eyes came alive with desire, frustration, but, chief of all, desperation. The woman simply shrugged, her face calm. She sucked in her lower lip.

The man told her of what he was sure he had seen on the mattress. His body shook with accusation. He said he knew it would have happened before long. He spoke wildly. Something, he said, had warned him when he was out hunting that it would be to-day. He stopped speaking, but still stared at her. He seemed hungrily hopeful that she would say a word of denial, that she would exclaim that it was a lie and protest that what he thought had happened had not. But she was gazing unconcernedly toward the cocoa trees. She hummed a tune softly.

The man took a laboured breath and turned again to the boy. He told him to climb. His voice was urgent. If the boy did not climb he would shoot him as he stood there—and by Jesus he meant it!

The boy asked him what for—why did he have to climb?

The man took aim with his rifle.



In alarm, the boy cringed away and partly hid himself behind the trunk of the coconut palm. The trunk was not big enough to conceal the whole of him.

The man lowered his rifle and told him not to be a fool. He spoke in a stammer. It was no use trying to hide behind the trunk of a coconut tree. That wouldn't save him. He repeated his order of a moment before.

The boy watched him, clutching the trunk of the tree.

The man told him to go on, to climb.

The boy clasped his arms around the trunk of the palm, and stared back at the man and his rifle. He seemed to be remembering what the man had said a few weeks ago on hiring him—that he needed a boy to work for him but that if anything funny happened he would make the boy climb the coconut tree. He had not explained what he meant by 'anything funny' nor had he given any reason why the consequence should involve climbing the coconut tree, but the look he had cast at his woman had told the boy enough to make him understand in what respect he had need to be wary.

The man's mien was forbidding as he began to fidget with his rifle. He uttered a growl, asking the boy whether he were going to climb or not.

The boy looked up at the fronds. The fronds moved faintly in the soft wind which was blowing high above the ground. The trunk was crooked and would be awkward for a climber unless he were experienced, and the tree was at least fifty feet tall. It swayed just perceptibly, but it must have seemed to the boy a dangerous, dizzy swaying.

The woman called out in a casual voice and asked the boy if he were afraid to climb. A strong, active boy like him. Let him climb and show the man that he could do it. Slight interest—slight partisanship—seemed evident in her manner now.

Both the man and the boy looked at her.

She changed her position on the boulder, her body moving with a slither like a snake's, her breasts loose and shifty under her dress.

The man swallowed, and blood darkened his face.

The boy moistened his lips as though at a recent, exciting memory. His eyes glittered slightly. His body shivered into action, and, legs and arms hugged around the trunk of the palm, he began to push himself up.

Hoarsely the man called at him, telling him yes, he had better climb. Climb right to the top and then down again. He grasped his rifle with a trembling anxiety, and his eyes were rigid in his head.

Slowly, with soft grunts, the boy pushed himself upward for perhaps six feet and then paused. His hands clutched, unsure and gauche. His feet slipped back a few inches.

A sparkle of triumph—and what appeared to be hope—entered the man's eyes.

The boy began to climb again—very hesitantly, uncertainly.

The man urged him on

The woman laughed and said that the man was not right in the head. Making the boy do a thing like this.

She was ignored. The boy was too set on his undertaking and the man seemed too intent watching him to trouble about her comments. The man's face was alive with nervous spasms. He must have been remembering the time when he himself used to climb this tree. He had climbed at the challenge of the woman. Despite her complete knowledge of his masculinity she had urged him to prove his strength and agility on this tree. It was sheer wanton perverseness on her part—or perhaps she must have seen his powerful embrace of the tree as a symbol—a symbol that gave her a remote physical satisfaction. For nearly a year, however, he had not been able to accomplish the feat. He had been ill, and after his illness he found that he could not climb as before. The woman had taunted him about it, putting it down to the weakness of advancing age. He was getting too old and weak for her, she had said. It had enraged him. He had tried again and again, but he had not been able to get even half-way up the trunk. He would come down panting and purple in the face.

Now it was the boy. The man must want to prove to the woman that the boy, despite his youth, could not do it, either. He must want to show that, though separated by many years, he and the boy were on a par for strength and virility.

The boy had paused again. He had travelled about a quarter the height of the trunk. The hillocks of his taut muscles glimmered in the mild sunshine emphatic with strength, but he seemed not to have been built for climbing; he was not prehensile enough; his hands and feet fumbled in spite of their muscular power. He uttered a soft whimper and slid back three or four feet.

The man barked in his joy. He almost danced. There was perspiration on his forehead.

The woman sucked her teeth and told him that he was mad.

Turned down toward them, the boy's face looked anguished and afraid—a black face sweating and distorted. The boy seemed appealing silently to them to do something about his plight.

The man beckoned him on frantically, waving his rifle about.

If he came down he would be a dead man, he cried. Then he let his voice die off abruptly, for he must have realized that he had perhaps done something inimical to his own interests in egging the boy on too far. Supposing out of utter fear, he must have reasoned, the boy did climb to the top and prove himself a better man in the eyes of the woman!

But in an instant a look of new hope came to his face. He was probably thinking now: Suppose when he was near the top the boy lost his nerve and fell and broke his neck. This was not so unlikely; the fellow seemed very jittery and unsure of himself up there; he was not accustomed to great heights, that was plain. And the trunk was swaying in a way that must terrify him. . . . To see him lying dead at the foot of the tree would be a relief in many ways. . . .

The boy was climbing again. Suddenly the man saw that he was nearly half-way up. He had paused again, but there was in his manner now more confidence. He kept his face close to the trunk and did not look down. He did not slip back a few feet as before. Moreover, the trunk was slimmer now and afforded his arms and legs a better grip.

The man's face twitched. His tongue showed itself, moistening the thick lips briefly. He opened his mouth as though to call out and urge the boy on, but no sound came.

The boy climbed two or three feet and paused again. Then he pushed himself up about four or five feet—rapidly and confidently. He seemed to be experimenting, seemed to have learnt something he had not known before, all within the past minute or two.

Definite panic showed on the man's face. He called to the boy to come down. That would do. He need not go up any further.

But the woman rose from the boulder and gestured the boy on. She called to him to climb on. He could do it. He was young and strong. Her eyes gleamed with excitement and her breast heaved. She kept sucking in her lower lip

The boy now seemed irresolute. He slipped back a few inches

The man beckoned him down.

The woman urged him up.

Deciding for himself, the boy began to push himself up again. With a steady ease that called forth loud cries of encouragement from the woman. Her body writhed as though it were possessed with flames. She gnawed her knuckles in her excitement.

Shame appeared to cloak down upon the man. He had ceased to call at the boy to come down. He held his rifle at the trail. His body had sagged. He stared upward as though he could watch the gloom of defeat gathering in the fronds of the palm. His face looked greyish.

It was the woman now who was dancing in joy and triumph.

Nothing could stop the boy. The trunk had slimmed to such an extent that the going was comparatively simple. He seemed to have conquered his nervousness, too. He did not look down once, but pushed himself up steadily. When his head came on a level with the first bunch of nuts he paused. He appeared to be panting, but there was self-assurance in his poise. He turned his shining black face down and his teeth showed in a white grin.

The woman hugged herself luxuriously, squealing and moaning in ecstasy. She seemed to want to call up congratulations to him but was too overcome with emotion to do so.

By the time the boy had slithered down to the ground the

man had walked away. Poised at the base of the tree, in a lather of sweat, the boy looked at the woman, and she looked back at him. Neither of them turned to see where the man was going, but instinctively they both seemed to know the issue.

They simply stared at each other, waiting. They heard the crunching of the man's boots in the cocoa fields. Then his foot-treads died away into the evening silence of the forest. A half-minute must have passed when they heard the sound they seemed to have been waiting for. It echoed and re-echoed in the hills.

## THE FUGITIVE

by VIVIAN L. VIRTUE

My very heart was in its blaze consumed—  
 A tree that blossomed, was an urgent fire  
 Licking the sky, leaping like some great pyre,  
 A dawn ago . . . Extinguished now, delumed  
 Of beauty, you would think they never bloomed,  
 Those wind-stripped boughs that burned with such desire  
 And passionate joy, such braveries as aspire  
 Heavenwards a moment, in that moment doomed.

Back to the gloom the gleam forever flies:  
 Slow in its coming, and too swift in homing.  
 Fugitive Beauty, by estrangement sped,  
 Builds no abiding nest beneath the skies  
 Where dawn has briefer tenure than the gloaming,  
 The living shorter leasehold than the dead.

## I SHALL REMEMBER

by H. D. CARBERRY

And so I leave this island—  
This island that I have loved  
This people that I have loved.

But I shall remember always  
The beauty of my people.  
And the beauty of my land

And in strange lands  
Where the fog presses down  
And even the street lamps are faint and misty,  
I shall remember  
The beauty of our nights,  
With stars so near  
That one could almost stretch and touch them,  
Stars—winking and flashing  
Magnificently—in a sky of velvet blue.

I shall remember  
Walking down long avenues of trees,  
The black asphalt flecked with pale moonlight  
Pouring through the acacia leaves—  
And the soft laughter of girls  
Leaning back, cool and inviting  
Against the trunks of flaming ponciana trees

And in the long days when the rain falls sullenly  
And no sun shines  
And all the earth lies in a weary stupor  
I shall remember  
The splendour of our sun  
The brightness of our days.  
And how the rain poured down  
Upon a passionate thirsty earth,  
Swiftly, unrelenting, with immeasurable power,  
Then vanished suddenly in a peal of childlike laughter  
And all the earth was green and light once more.

I shall remember  
 The warmth of our island seas,  
 The sparkling whiteness of the breaking waves  
 And the blue haze on our hills and mountains  
 With their noisy streams cascading down  
 Sheer cliffs in clouds of incandescent spray  
 And deafening sound.

And in strange cities  
 Among unaccustomed people  
 Who move palefaced with tired staring eyes,  
 I shall remember  
 The warmth and gaiety of my people,  
 The polygot colour and variety of their faces,  
 The happy fusion of our myriad races  
 In the common love that unites and binds us to this land.

And I shall yearn for the sight  
 Of faces black and bronzed,  
 People with dark sparkling eyes  
 With ready tongue  
 And laughter loud and unashamed.

I shall remember  
 The faces of the women from the hills  
 Bringing down strange fruits  
 To Saturday's markets.

I shall remember  
 The tread of their feet on the naked earth  
 Their unconscious strength and poise,  
 As with basket-bearing head thrown back,  
 They stride to town  
 Like Israel to the promised land.

Yes, I shall remember always  
 This my island and my people  
 And I shall remember always  
 The beauty of my people and my land.

POETRY

POEM

by H. D. CARBERRY

Surging bodies  
Rise and fall  
Sun glistening on them  
Orange and brown,  
Chocolate and ebony,  
Rippling muscles  
Cooled with a thin film of sweat,  
Beautiful sun-tanned bodies.  
Supple and strong like tigers  
But smiles not snarls reveal their even teeth  
As the longshoremen sing at their work on the waterfront.

POEM

by H. D. CARBERRY

The words we tossed between us  
Fell heavily, limply  
As a bird shot suddenly in flight falters  
And plummets down to earth.  
So the silence grew—  
As empty as we were within  
And the measured tick of the clock upon the wall  
Judged us evenly, equitably,  
Affording no escape from reality—  
And the broken bridge that lay between accustomed minds.

POEM

by H. D. CARBERRY

Oh my heart,  
I cannot see to the end of the road,  
I do not even know if it has an end,  
I only know that I must walk it  
And I would I had your company.



## PROPHECY

by H. D. CARBERRY

There shall come a time  
When these children in rags  
Who litter the streets,  
Who know the crushing mastery of poverty,  
And the curses of dirt and slovenliness,  
Shall walk with head erect  
Proud owners of a new world  
Masters of themselves  
Admitting no inequality,  
Feeling no inferiority,  
Only a great humility and wonder  
For the destiny that shall be theirs.

## POEM

by K. E. INGRAM

The hills are like great waves of music  
But of a still and soundless music:  
The hills are silences.  
Dark silences on moonless nights  
Silver silences on moon-nights:  
The hills are pure silences  
Seen from other silences.

The hills are the great silences  
That follow when the clear ripples  
Of bird-song and bird-flute  
Have ringed away in that blue  
and greatest of all silences.

# BLACKOUT

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ROGER MAIS

THE city was in partial blackout, the street lights had not been turned on, on account of the wartime policy of conserving electricity, and the houses behind their discreet arelia hedges were wrapped in an atmosphere of exclusive respectability.

The young woman waiting at the bus stop was not in the least nervous, in spite of the wave of panic that had been sweeping the city about bands of hooligans roaming the streets after dark and assaulting unprotected women. She was a sensible young woman to begin with, who realized that one good scream would be sufficient to bring a score of respectable suburban householders running to her assistance. On the other hand she was an American, and fully conscious of the tradition of American young women that they don't scare easily.

Even that slinking black shadow that seemed to be slowly materializing out of the darkness at the other side of the street did not disconcert her. She was only slightly curious now that she observed that the shadow was approaching her.

It was a young man dressed in conventional shirt and pants, with a pair of canvas shoes on his feet. That was what lent the suggestion of slinking to his movements, because he went along noiselessly; that, and the mere suggestion of a stoop. For he was very tall. And there was a curious look as of a great hunger or unrest about the eyes. But the thing that struck her immediately was the fact that he was black; the other particulars scarcely made any impression at all as against that. In her country it is not every night that a white woman would be likely to be thus nonchalantly approached by a black man. There was enough of novelty in all this to intrigue her. She seemed to remember that any sort of adventure could happen to you in one of these tropical islands of the West Indies.

'Could you give me a light, lady?' the man said.

True she was smoking, but she had only just lit this one from the stub of the cigarette she had thrown away. The fact was she had no matches. Would he believe her, she wondered. 'I am sorry. I haven't got a match.'

The young man looked into her face, seemed to hesitate an instant and said, his brow slightly wrinkled in perplexity: 'But you are smoking.'

There was no argument against that. Still she was not particular about giving him a light from the cigarette she was smoking. It may be stupid, but there was a suggestion of intimacy about such an act, simple as it was, that, call it what you may, she just could not accept offhand.

There was a moment's hesitation on her part now, during which time the man's steady gaze never left her face. There was something of pride and challenge in his look, and curiously mingled with that, something of quiet amusement too.

She held out her cigarette toward him between two fingers

'Here,' she said, 'you can light from that.'

In the act of bending his head to accept the proffered light, he had perforce to come quite close to her. He did not seem to understand that she meant him to take the lighted cigarette from her hand. He just bent over her hand to light his.

Presently he straightened up, inhaled a deep lungful of soothing smoke and exhaled again with satisfaction. She saw then that he was smoking the half of a cigarette, that had been clinched and saved for future consumption.

'Thank you,' said the man, politely; and was in the act of moving off when he noticed that instead of returning her cigarette to her lips she had casually, unthinkingly flicked it away. He observed all these things in the split part of a second that it took him to say those two words. It was almost a whole cigarette she had thrown away. She had been smoking it with evident enjoyment a moment before.

He stood there looking at her, with a sort of cold speculation.

In a way it unnerved her. Not that she was frightened. He seemed quite decent in his own way, and harmless; but he made her feel uncomfortable. If he had said something rude she would have preferred it. It would have been no more than

she would have expected of him. But instead, this quiet contemptuous look. Yes, that was it. The thing began to take on definition in her mind. How dare he; the insolence!

'Well, what are you waiting for?' she said, because she felt she had to break the tension somehow.

'I am sorry I made you waste a whole cigarette,' he said.

She laughed a little nervously. 'It's nothing,' she said, feeling a fool.

'There's plenty more where that came from, eh?'

'I suppose so.'

This would not do. She had no intention of standing at a street corner jawing with—well, with a black man. There was something indecent about it. Why didn't he move on? As though he had read her thoughts he said.

'This is the street, lady. It's public.'

Well, anyway, she didn't have to answer him. She could snub him quietly, the way she should have properly done from the start.

'It's a good thing you're a woman,' he said.

'And if I were a man?'

'As man to man maybe I'd give you something to think about,' he said, still in that quiet even voice.

In America they lynched them for less than that, she thought.

'This isn't America,' he said. 'I can see you are an American. In this country there are only men and women. You'll learn about that if you stop here long enough.'

This was too much. But there was nothing she could do about it. But yes there was. She could humour him. Find out what his ideas were about this question, anyway. It would be something to talk about back home. Suddenly she was intrigued.

'So in this country there are only men and women, eh?'

'That's right. So to speak there is only you an' me, only there are hundreds of thousands of us. We seem to get along somehow without lynchings and burnings and all that.'

'Do you really think that all men are created equal?'

'It don't seem to me there is any sense in that. The facts show it ain't so. Look at you an' me, for instance. But that isn't

to say you're not a woman, the same way as I am a man. You see what I mean?"

'I can't say I do.'

'You will, though, if you stop here long enough.'

She threw a quick glance in his direction.

The man laughed.

'I don't mean what you're thinking,' he said. 'You're not my type of woman. You don't have anything to fear under that heading.'

'Oh!'

'You're waiting for the bus, I take it. Well, that's it coming now. Thanks for the light.'

'Don't mention it,' she said, with a nervous sort of giggle.

He made no attempt to move along as the bus came up. He stood there quietly aloof, as though in the consciousness of a male strength and pride that was just his. There was something about him that was at once challenging and disturbing. He had shaken her supreme confidence in some important sense.

As the bus moved off she was conscious of his eyes' quiet scrutiny of her, without the interruption of artificial barriers; in the sense of dispassionate appraisal, as between man and woman; any man, any woman.

She fought resolutely against the very natural desire to turn her head and take a last look at him. Perhaps she was thinking about what the people on the bus might think. And perhaps it was just as well that she did not see him bend forward with that swift hungry movement, retrieving from the gutter the half-smoked cigarette she had thrown away.

## POEM

by ROGER MAIS

The wind is not a lyre nor a lute  
 Nor any wind instrument nor any stringed  
 Instrument.  
 Nor any instrument like piccolo or flute.  
 The wind is a great maestro, with long  
 Streaming hair,  
 And mad with the madness of a great Maestro.

# WATERFRONT BAR

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BY VICTOR REID

THEY stood at the bar, belly up to the rail, no light in their eyes at all.

The barmaid said: 'Coming up.'

When she said *coming up*, her mouth was an inverted U, leaning on end. She whisked the three glasses into the sink and worked a limp half of lime around the edges.

One of the three women at the rail laughed. Her laugh was a thin reed stitching the scene. It went up to the octave, came back again, was lost in the bottom of a hiccup.

Daylight slithered out of the bar on webbed feet, slithering over three empty wash baskets at their feet. The three washerwomen never saw when it went.

The barmaid clicked on the lights. Three women and the barmaid stood under the lights. A limp half of lime went around the edges of three glasses.

\* \* \*

The woman who had laughed brought her voice back from the bottom of a hiccup. She said: 'Wash me in the blood of the lamb.'

Another woman said: 'Who must wash you, Daph?'

Daph belched and said: 'Give me a cigarette, Schooner.'

Schooner said: 'You hear what the woman call me, Peggy?'

Peggy pushed a cigarette to Daph and slid one into her own mouth. She spoke around the cigarette: 'Don't you gone and wash for round-the-island Schooner, Schooner?'

Daph searched her pocket for a match. The match was there but her fingers were fumbly. She leaned on the bar and belched.

Schooner said: 'You drunk?'

Daph said: 'You go to.'

'Go yourself.'

The barmaid used a gill measure. Seven-and-sixpence white rum splashed over the edge of the measure. Peggy laughed.

'Treat we good, Miss Amy!'

Miss Amy said: 'Steel bottom?'

Schooner and Peggy said together: 'Steel bottom.'

Daph passed her hand over her face and murmured: 'Wash me in the blood of the lamb.'

Miss Amy steeled the rum with three gills of ginger wine. She wrinkled her nose and put the bottle hastily away. She pushed the bowl of cracked ice towards them. She said they should poison themselves.

Daph used a word.

A boy pushed the swing-doors from Port Royal Street. His tray entered first. Light splashed on the burnish of a dozen pink combs tiered on his tray; on the curly hair tiered on his head.

The boy said: 'Combs? Toothbrush? Hairpins? Shoelace?'

Daph said: 'Have a drink, Honeydripper.'

Peggy said: 'How many shillings for those sixpence combs?'

Schooner said: 'Take a drink, 'Dripper?'

The boy said: 'Combs? Toothbrush? Hair . . . ?' His voice went with him into Port Royal Street.

Daph said: 'Make the woman-boy gwan.' She drank the white rum and ginger wine as somebody else would drink water. Miss Amy said: 'Jesus.'

Miss Amy went to the radiophone. She was searching for *The Donkey's Serenade*. She liked *The Donkey's Serenade*.

Four sailors came in through the Princes Street door. They wore oilstained dungarees and said: 'Hi there, Amy!'

They said it heartily. They were oilboat-men, in port for weeks and drinking on tick. No ready cash. Tick.

A quarter-Chinese girl followed them in and leaned on the rail. Her slant eyes gathered gleams from the light. Daph looked on her.

Daph said: 'What a way things tight 'pon the waterfront, Peggy?'

Peggy said: 'Don't interfere with people, Daph.'

The oilboat-men drank beer. Their voices were deep, like ships' bowels, and American accented.

'Hell, when we gonna get to sea?'

'Lousy town.'

'You guys know Bill Doran on the *Alamein*?'

'Sure, I know Bill.' Sure. Sure.

'He got a letter from his wife yesterday. Twins.'

'Twins? Hell.'

'Tough.'

'Yeah.'

The tray came through the door before the man who carried it in. 'Peanuts? Mint sticks? Guava cheese?'

'Have a drink, Honeydripper?'

'Daph, leave people alone.'

'You guys heard what the A.F. of L. said about Panama registry?'

'Buy a mint stick, sailor?'

'Come again, Miss Amy. Steel.'

'Jesus.'

Miss Amy changed the record Aluminium mutes on brass trumpets stitched a theme on the boogie pattern. The girl with the slanting eyes covered her eyes with her eyelids. She smoothed her palms down her thighs. She took her palms from her thighs and held her palms parallel with the ground. Her body quivered. Daph looked on her.

Daph said: 'Waterfront gal feeling well.'

'Daph, leave people alone. Schooner, why you go wash for schooner?'

'Can't pick and choose these days.'

'I hear 'Merican yacht coming in to-morrow.'

'But Lawd—Them good to wash for!'

'Wash me in the blood of the lamb.'

'Daph, you drunk?'

The man with the tray held the door open with the tray so



the two men could come in. The two men came in and held the door open so that the man with the tray could go out.

Daph said: 'See them two Russian-men here?'

The men were dock-workers. They didn't look like Russians. They were Negroes.

Peggy said: 'Daph, you drunk? Why don't you leave people alone?'

The men went to the rail. One said: 'Comrade,' and showed Miss Amy a fist.

Miss Amy said: 'Leave politics alone and order your liquor.'

'Bring a quarter-quart in two.'

'Schooner, how you vote me love?'

'Labour, Daph me love.'

The arm-rest of a crutch came through the swing door and the one-legged man hopped in like a great bird behind it. He steadied himself and his eyes searched the room.

Daph said. 'Cho! Bad luck! One-foot beggar-man!' And, for good luck, tied a swift knot into her apron.

The one-legged man said a word. He went over to the oilboat-men. The oilboat-men flapped their hands and said *Naw!* The one-legged man went out again, saying a word as he went.

'Wash me in the blood, in the cleansing stream.'

'Daph, you must drink your rum and behave.'

'So the guy said he wouldn't go to sea with a nigger on the valves.'

'They are all wet, these Southerners.'

'Personally, I wouldn't kiss a Sheenie or a nigger.'

'Listen, punk, Christ was a Jew and Solomon was a coloured guy, see?'

'Yeah? How does that make me kiss 'em?'

'Listen, punk, a guy named Hitler—'

'Pipe down, mugs, you're in a foreign port.'

'Hell, Peggy—you see sailormen nearly fight?'

'Daph, leave people alone!'

'Steel, Miss Amy.'

'Jesus!'

# DIGGING MATCH

---

VICTOR REID

THEY came up out of the Valley with the sun. They walked long-striding from the valley floor with dew on their feet and sun on their faces and a song pouring from their throats.

The song poured from their throats and gathered wings that took it around the brown walls of earth and up to the green canopy of trees and further up so that it may have perhaps knocked on the blue door of heaven.

They came up out of the valley with the sun and took the hill road to Ma Susan's.

The song they now sang, was old Ancient as Africa, which was too ancient for them to know, so they gave to it words they knew, but kept the tune which was as ancient as Africa. They sang the song with toes climbing into brown earth and hoes flashing and clanking as they twirled them . . .

One Monday morning—*hol' hum, Joe!*  
Go down a' Chapelon—*hol' hum, Joe!*

Juniper, cedar, and red coffee-berries, dew dripping from their leaves to be jewels falling through the air and then to be food for the earth, as the earth folded them from sight. Rich smells of the full, heavy trees waking to the embrace of day and the kiss of sun and giving in thanksgiving to the day and the sun all the rich smells.

Meet up with 'Keziah—*hol' him, Joe!*  
Asked me for the doctor—*hol' hum, Joe!*

To the tune, singing new words for old words too ancient for them to know.

There was a round dozen of them, men and women. They walked long-striding up the hill and around a corner, and passed the breadfruit tree by the red rock that marked the boundary of Coaz Levi's, and then up Timothy's Bump and around another corner, and there was Ma Susan's.

The song changed.

Mawnin', Sue, mawnin', Ma'am,  
The angels come to tell you how-de-doo . . .

New words to old tunes.

They swung past the bastard-cedar that marked the gateway to Ma Susan's, and sang and laughed as they met the old woman who wagged her bandanna-ed head to the tune and curtsied in mock solemnity . . .

'Mawnin', Ma Susan . . .'

'Mawnin', me gal . . .'

'God be, Ma Sue . . .'

'Mawnin', Bro' Amos . . . mawnin', Lucy . . . mawnin',  
Coaz Joseph . . . Coaz Davie . . .'

The song was ended for the time being; for there was hot cerosee and mint teas bubbling in the big *met*-pot and journey-cakes, and fire-roast potatoes, all spread on the lacy white towel.

People must eat before their hoes bed into the brown earth that is waiting for the hoes. Feast before the marriage consummation.

'Meg, gal, how the heifer?'

'She dropped last week, Ma Sue.'

'Thankie God, gal. Coaz Joe, you come to help Ma Sue put in her peas?'

'Yes, Ma Sue—best time now, eh ma? Best time now for spring rains.'

'Best time, me son. Lucy, gal, how the piccaninnies?'

'All hearty, Ma Sue. Four now me have, you know?'

'Words ha' come to me ears, gal. What a way your quiver full-O!'

Laugh, and the sun on their faces and under the skin of their faces and on the rich earth that is waiting for their hoes . . . the earth that smells of life and the things that will make life.

Now people have eaten their full.

*'Come-O! Come-O! Day-cloud has come up a long time now! Line up! Line-up-O! Get into line-O!'*

Up on the hillside with the waiting brown earth. People must stand so their toes grip the earth and room is left for the

swing of their hoes. Lucy and Meg and Tamah must sling the baskets full of red peas and trickle them into the open wounds as the men bite the earth with their hoes.

*Into line! Line up-O!* Joe and Amos and Davie and everybody fall into line; for Singer Boy is ready with his timing stick and his song.

Into line with room to swing; and as the furrows grow slowly along the hillside and reach from boundary to boundary, then step back Joe and Amos and Davie and everybody. And into line once more, another furrow will grow along the hill.

Then forward will step Lucy and Meg and Tamah, and red peas will trickle from their fingers into the furrow to lay with sun and rain and earth until green life pushes up.

Sing it, Singer Boy! New words to old tunes the words of which are too old to know . . .

*Hill and gully rider as you go right 'round . . .*

They have come to help Ma Susan, for she is old and her land is wide, and to eat her land must be wide.

So they came up out of the Valley and now their hoes are bedding into the earth as they plant the grain that will make her eat.

*Digging match-O!  
If you tumble down you break your neck  
If you break your neck you go to hell  
If you go to hell the Devil glad . . .  
Diggin match-O!*

## VILLANELLE OF PEACE

by VIVIAN L. VIRTUE

Sirs, we would drink at the living brook of Peace.  
 We have come a barren and blinding way and long.  
 Our blistered, hell-bound days pant for release.

Your noisy councils gabble like helpless geese  
 Penned for the market . . . we are priced at a song!  
 Sirs, we would drink at the living brook of Peace,

Wring even the merciful dew from Gideon's fleece;  
 A drop may suffice to save—our need so strong.  
 Our blistered, hell-bound days pant for release.

Still must mirages mock us? still increase  
 Despairs that eat our youth like a locust throng?  
 Sirs, we would drink at the living brook of Peace.

It is time our spirit's drought should have surcease.  
 It is time to smite this rock of stubborn wrong.  
 Our blistered, hell-bound days pant for release.

When will the desert know some blossoming lease?  
 The quickening waters rush the wastes among?  
*Sirs, we would drink at the living brook of Peace.*  
*Our blistered, hell-bound days pant for release!*

## ***Margiad Evans***

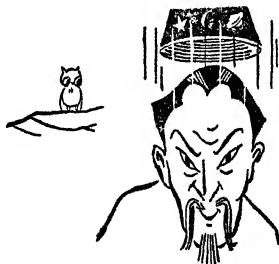
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## NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

PETER BLACKMAN was born in Barbados on 28th June, 1909, Educated there and in England. Missionary to West Africa, 1937. He has lived in England since 1937, and has done some broadcasting, lecturing, and what he describes as 'other oddments by way of finding a livelihood'.

CLAUDE IVAN LUSHINGTON was born on the 19th September, 1922. He was educated privately and, for a short while, at the College, Swindon, England, and St. Andrew's University, Scotland. He served in the R.A.F. from 1944-7, and is now employed as Assistant House Property Manager of The Planning and Housing Commission of Trinidad and Tobago. This is his first publication in an English magazine. He lives in San Fernando, Trinidad.

G. W. LAMMING was born in 1927, in Barbados. He now lives in Trinidad, teaching English to South Americans. Some of his poetry has been broadcast in the B.B.C. 'Caribbean Voices' programme. He lives in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

CLIFFORD W. SEALY was born on 8th November, 1927. He left school at the age of twelve to go to work and is now a clerical employee in the oil industry. He edits the working-class magazine *Forward*, and is prominent in political and youth organizations in Trinidad. He started writing at the age of twenty, won first prize in the *Trinidad Guardian's* competition with a story 'Parson-Man Play' and both the stories here printed were read over the B.B.C. this year. He lives in San Fernando, Trinidad.

WILLY RICHARDSON was born in Trinidad on 28th August, 1919. He was educated at Queen's Royal College, Port of Spain, and is an External Graduate of London University. He has had six stories read on the B.B.C.'s 'Caribbean Voices' programme. He writes 'Most of the material is gathered in Trinidad, which I know pretty well, having spent the last three years travelling to every part of it in the Central Library Book Van'.

H. D. CARBERRY was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1921. He was educated in Jamaica. In December 1944, he came to

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England and is reading law at Oxford. He has been writing poetry, sketches, and short stories for about eight years. The poem *Epitaph* was broadcast several times during 1946 by the B.B.C.

C. L. HERBERT was born in Trinidad on 27th November, 1924, and educated at Queen's Royal College. He served in the R.A.F. in Canada in 1944. At present is a pupil-surveyor in Trinidad. His work has been broadcast in 'Caribbean Voices'.

K. E. INGRAM, VICTOR REID, VIVIAN L. VIRTUE appeared in the Jamaican issue of *Life and Letters*, April, 1948.

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

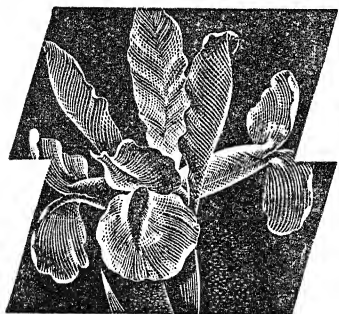
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TWELVE MILLION BLACK VOICES. RICHARD WRIGHT.

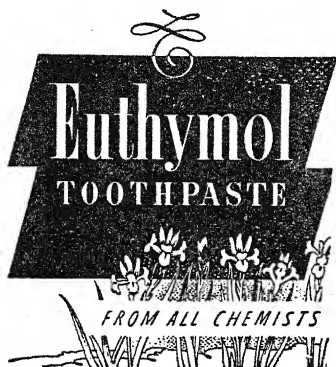
Lindsay Drummond. Illustrated. 15s.

INEVITABLY Mr. Wright's new book, 'a folk history of the Negro in the United States,' invites comparison with a pioneer in the field, W. E. B. Du Bois' *Souls of Black Folk*; but whereas Dr. Du Bois, a product of Harvard and Heidelberg, approached the subject of Negro oppression from the point of view of the aspirations of the Talented Tenth—the emerging Negro intelligentsia of half a century ago—Mr. Wright, writing as a poet and novelist with an eye for 'that which is qualitative and abiding in Negro experience', bases himself upon the broad masses.

He writes of the Negro's way of life in Africa before the slave trade began, of the horrors of the Middle Passage and of the long night of slavery. When freedom dawned in 1865, after the Civil War, there were some 4,000,000 blacks 'stranded and bewildered' upon the soil which they had tilled under compulsion for two and a half centuries. As if to test the worth of



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the Emancipation Proclamation 'thousands of us tramped from place to place for the sheer sake of moving, looking, wondering, landless upon the land'. But the overwhelming mass of the ex-slaves, eager to keep together in family units, remained on the tobacco, cane, rice, and cotton plantations to form a new relationship with their former masters.

Himself the son of a share-cropper, Mr. Wright who, in *Black Boy*, has given a blistering account of his childhood and youth in Jackson, Mississippi, has known at first hand the pattern of the new bondage: 'full of the fear of the Lords of the Land, bowing and grinning when we meet white faces, toiling from sun to sun, living in unpainted wooden shacks that sit casually and insecurely upon the red clay'—deprived of the franchise, lynched, exposed to mob violence, subject to a poll-tax, segregation, and the thousand and one manifestations of Jim Crow.

Between 1890 and 1920 over 2,000,000 Negroes packed up and left the South. North of the Ohio River the Negro migrants met *indifference*, silent hostility, a colour line in industry and the trade unions. 'Restrictive covenants' (the device by which property owners keep Negroes out of certain residential areas) hemmed them in. Race riots often flared up. . . .

In 1937 Mr. Wright's first book, *Uncle Tom's Children*, appeared. A collection of four short novels, it was awarded a national prize for the best book written by an employee of the Federal Writers Project of the Works Progress Administration under the New Deal. The high promise shown in *Uncle Tom's Children* was fulfilled three years later with the appearance of *Native Son*. The story of Bigger Thomas, the 'hero type of cowardly bully', the Negro boy who only began to live as he was about to die, not only placed Mr. Wright in the forefront of that tough, resilient and highly race-conscious school of Negro novelists thrown up in America during the depression. Something else had happened. Negro literature—with its traditions stretching back to Francis Williams, a free Negro in Jamaica who early in the eighteenth century, went to Cambridge as the protégée of an English duke, owned slaves, and wrote in Latin the much-quoted *Ode Ethiopissa*—had with the power and brilliance of Mr. Wright's performance

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ERIC WALRÖND

THE SUNLIT CARIBBEAN. ALEC WAUGH. Evans Brothers.  
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THERE is a curiously old-fashioned flavour about this book. Perhaps that is because, in the author's view, 'letters of introduction are absolutely essential if the tourist is to get the most out of a West Indian trip.' One is tempted to ask 'the most what?' and the answer comes in the next sentence. 'He can have, I will admit, a whole lot of fun without them.' It seems to me strangely callous to go to the West Indies just for that, but let us follow this tourist. 'He will make friends at his hotel and he will be unlucky if he does not in the course of a week make contact by chance with at least one resident, who will invite him to his house and introduce him to the clubs. If he were to make a longish stay, that single contact would lead to other contacts, so that by the end of a month he would be leading a varied and amusing social life.' Well—perhaps; though I cannot help feeling that the tourist would have a singularly naive definition of what is varied and amusing, and why go to the West Indies to lead a social life?

However, no doubt there are still a number of people to whom, as to Mr. Waugh, 'Jamaica is a vast playground,' and no doubt this book gives the kind of picture they expect. I myself do not consider him a reliable guide. He found the chief hotel in Trinidad 'in every way first-class' and writes of Barbados 'There is not a great deal to do or see. The island is very flat. There is a lack of fine views.' Barbados is not mountainous, but the part called Scotland is, as the name implies, hilly, and the views round Bath-Sheba and Cherry Tree Hill are very fine. Such statements, therefore, make me unable to share his rather clumsily expressed view that he has 'made stays long enough in eight British West Indian islands to feel that I have got inside the atmosphere of the island's life', and I fail entirely to understand what he means when he says that 'Jamaica's history is of a domestic nature'.

R. H.

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In order to fit the excerpts into her scheme, she has to make cuts. This, and the notes she appends for modern production, seem to me likely to give a false impression to any not familiar with the original works, and it is this type of reader and this only, to whom the book will appeal. However, it is all done in the sacred name of popularizing the classics for the million, so that all that need be said is that it should no doubt prove useful to those with no previous knowledge of the plays or of the period.

TREVOR JAMES

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IT would be a little *outré* to feel regional patriotism for many of London's suburbs, but it is perfectly rational to love Hampstead, where the air is so pure that some members of the Royal Society once had the idea of introducing it into the City by means of underground pipes. Only fifty years ago Hampstead was still a parish, but things had certainly happened in the parish. John Gay, for instance, had taken the Hampstead waters and found material at the Spa for *The Beggar's Opera*; the pleasure grounds at Belsize House had contained a chapel where the urgent could be married at the

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shortest possible notice for an amazingly small fee; the Philo-Investigists had initiated at Hampstead the campaign to limit their conversation to 'yea and nay', and to Hampstead Heath had streamed the folk who feared Mother Shipton's prophesy concerning the end of the world, hoping, evidently, to escape there the day of judgment. To-day foxes are still to be found in Kenwood.

Hampstead is worthy of local patriotism and of Mr. Preston's book, which has the right regional quality. There are fine photos of Well Walk and Holly Place mixed up with pictures of contemporary mayors and Dr. Cyril Joad, there are notes about vestrymen and a gentleman who was 'a well-known and popular butcher'; there are the touches of 'fine writing' which suit so well the local volume ('But she, Mother London, good dame, has long and slender fingers, etc.'). expected extracts from general history which seem to have no especial reference but set the tone, and delightful notes on beautiful old houses which are so eminently relevant.

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OSWELL BLAKESTON

# EDITORIAL

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*December, 1948*

THIS number has been long in preparing and long postponed. Even now, for reasons beyond our control, certain promised contributions have not yet arrived, and I am particularly sorry to have to go to press without an article on the film in India by K. Ahmad Abbas, who last contributed to us on this subject ten years ago. This would have been a companion piece to Narayana Menon's study of the dance.

On the other hand, the delay has enabled us to include more reviews than would otherwise have been possible of books by Indians, published both there and here, and this I feel is all to the good as it draws the attention of readers to volumes through which they can make a deeper acquaintance of the subject than is possible within the covers of a single number of a magazine. The choosing of reviewers for books by Indians is not as simple as, I hope, the results here included may suggest. On certain subjects, notably poetry and philosophy, Indians themselves would seem most fitted for the task, because more naturally attuned. The question remains, however, that certain aspects which an Indian would take for granted, certain habits of thought or even style of expression, would be just those for which a Western reader would stand most in need of elucidation. It has seemed necessary to me to choose certain books to be reviewed by Europeans, others by Indians; the guiding principle was bound to be, ultimately, one of instinct, and though one can no more profess to be infallible in that than in anything else, I do think the reviewers here included are to be thanked for their considered and constructive co-operation. Some of the most recent, and one or two of the more specialized, such as *Vedanta for the Western World* (edited by Christopher Isherwood, Allen and Unwin, 16s.) and *Hindu Psychology* by Swami Akhilananda (Routledge, 12s. 6d.), it has not been possible to 'cover' in time for press-date. Reviews of these will follow

in a later issue, and as this one is the last of the year, it may interest readers to know something of our plans for 1949

January is to be a Chinese number, of which particulars will be found on the inside back cover. February and March will not be 'special', save in the sense that after three consecutive numbers from abroad, a 'home' number may seem to have become out of the ordinary. Certainly, the contents are. They will be chosen from articles on schools in pre-Norman England by Winifred Graham Wilson; on Mannyng's *Dancers of Colbeck* by Francis Berry, a Spanish will of 1536 by E. Herisson; a consideration of the Book of Revelation as drama, by Frederick Carter, and an examination by George Ewart Evans of the new translation of the *Mabinogion* by Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones, recently published by the Golden Cockerel Press. Poems from Shetland are by W. J. Tait, from Scotland by Maurice Lindsay and Nessie Dunsmuir, and from Wales by Margiad Evans and Lynette Roberts, whilst Maurice Carpenter contributes a free rendering from William Langland's *Vision of Do-Well*. Stories are by Phyllis Bottome and Elizabeth Sewell, and reviews by Derek Stanford, Adrian Brunel, George Barker, Dorothy Pilley Richards, Roy McFadden, Fred Urquhart, John Freeman, and others.

March's issue will be drawn, with the assistance of Robert Greacen, from Ireland, and this will be followed during the summer, if we can think as far ahead as that, by a number dealing with contemporary Italian writing. For this I am happy to acknowledge the help of Signora Maria Luisa Astaldi, editor of the review '*Ulsee*'.

Meanwhile, contributors are asked to note that these numbers are full and also that, in consequence, the Editor will be in the *New World* for the first three months of the New Year. They and correspondents are therefore reminded that only the shortest and most urgent letters can be answered until March, whilst manuscripts will be acknowledged but will not be sent on.

# THREE INDIAN NOVELISTS

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## S. MENON MARATH

INDIANS discovered the novel only comparatively recently. Of other forms of literary expression there had been plenty in the past—fables, chronicles, dramas, and poetry. But for the novel India had to wait for the arrival of the British. The British brought the novels of Scott, Lytton and Wilkie Collins. Educated Indians like Bankim Chandra Chatterji in the middle of the nineteenth century were quick to recognize in the novel a powerful medium for expressing their reactions to life and its cares and joys. Here was a form, they said to themselves, which could be used to tell tales, but indirectly it could also be used to criticize the injustices of society or to express their own views on life. There was soon a small crop of novels bearing the mark of the influence of Scott and Lytton. Most of them were sensational stories of love, intrigue and narrow escapes. Bankim Chandra Chatterji wrote over a dozen novels, the majority of them historical romances. In two or three he tried to portray the social scene of his time.

Rabindranath Tagore was the next important pioneer to experiment with the new form. He used the novel to illumine the social scene of Bengal. In the series of novels he wrote, Tagore's theme was the struggle of the liberal thought of Europe against the dead wood of orthodox Hindu tradition. The environment rather than the character of the individual was what he was concerned with. The emphasis was on the reform which the novel could be made to achieve, or at any rate to start moving.

Tagore's theme, made more urgent by the unbalanced industrialization of India since the 1914-18 war, is also the theme of Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan and Mulk Raj Anand, the three Indian novelists I want to write about. I have chosen them because they are the three most significant novelists writing in India to-day. Further, their works are written in English and published in England, and should be accessible to

readers here. They have studied thoughtfully the tradition and standard of craftsmanship set by European novelists.

Let me take Raja Rao first. *Kanthapura* is the only novel he wrote. He wrote it while he was a student in England. Although he showed considerable promise he never followed it up. In *Kanthapura* he gives us the story of how a South Indian village rallied to Gandhi's call to non-co-operation. In the national struggles of the twenties thousands of villages all over India responded in much the same way. They shed their prejudices against the Congress movement and took up hand-spinning on the spinning-wheel. They relented in their attitude to the Untouchables and often admitted them into the social circle. It is the picture of a typical Indian community undergoing political education. You see their narrow parish outlook being broken down by the impact of the national struggle.

Raja Rao's novel was an experiment. He attempted to convey to the non-Indian reader the atmosphere of an Indian village. He forged a bold technique for it. He chose an old grandmother to tell the tale of her village. In a thought-provoking foreword to the novel he explains his choice of technique: 'We in India think quickly,' he says, 'we talk quickly and when we move we move quickly . . . We tell one interminable tale. Episode follows episode, and when our thoughts stop our breath stops, and we move on to another thought. This was and is the ordinary style of our story-telling.' So the old woman moves to and fro in time and the story is the stream of her memory. The pattern of the village with its divisions into streets for the high-caste Hindus and the streets for the Untouchables emerges smoothly. We get a sense of the rhythm of its life through the gossip, jealousies, and preoccupations of its people. The style had to be adapted to suit her rambling, reminiscing speech. For this purpose Raja Rao utilized the innovations in style of James Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

R. K. Narayan, my second author, has written three novels, *The Bachelor of Arts*, *The Dark Room*, and *The English Teacher*. He used to be a teacher himself, and has never been out of India. As you can see from his titles, he writes of the educated middle-class Indian. He draws the typical South Indian social

scene with ironic and amused detachment. The student life at the English College, the swotting for exams, the hunt for a job in an overcrowded market, the disappointments that await the B A. One is plunged into the complex social and religious customs and traditions that guide the Brahmin family. One turns the pages and comes across the caste-snobbery. One meets the obscure caste divisions and sub-divisions, the marriage customs, and the tyranny of astrology.

Narayan shows also the other important side of the modern Indian society—the encroachment of Western civilization on it. The roots of the age-old traditions are loosened under its pressure. Old customs are worn down and lose their hold on the younger generations. Listen to their irritation: ‘Why should we be cudgelled and nose-led by our elders? Why can’t we be allowed to arrange our lives as we please?’ asks the Bachelor of Arts impatiently. Marriage has always been arranged by the parents. But the B.A. rebels against this, and wants to marry for love ‘I shall marry this girl and no one else,’ he declares to his bewildered and shocked mother. The mother is convinced that she knows what is best for her son. ‘Do you think marriage is a child’s game?’ she asks him. ‘We don’t know anything about them (meaning the girl’s people) . . . what they are worth, if the stars and other things about the girl are all right . . . They can’t be all right if they kept the girl unmarried till sixteen. She must have attained puberty ages ago. We have a face to keep in this town.’

Narayan’s latest novel, *The English Teacher*, was published in 1945. The story is a slender one. Ramani, a lecturer in English at the Malgudi College, moves from the students’ hostel where he has been living to set up house with his wife and child. Then his happy life suddenly comes to a tragic end with the death of his wife from typhoid. He establishes contact with her spirit through spiritualism, and happiness again comes into his life.

It shows a great advance on his previous novels. The characters of Ramani and his wife are sensitively observed, and they have more depth. Narayan has lost the slightness of *The Dark Room*. He has had a very good press in this country. But I can’t help feeling that the narrative moves rather slowly

and aimlessly at the beginning. The early part tends to become a dull chronicle of trivial incidents. But the scene of the wife's illness more than compensates for this. It is described with moving pathos. It is a pity he had to introduce spiritualism and communion with the dead in the second part.

Mulk Raj Anand, my last author, is the most gifted and easily the most outstanding of the three. He has published seven novels, besides a collection of short stories and a book on Indian Art. He takes a keen interest in all human activities, and is a lively controversialist.

Anand is the first Indian novelist writing in English to portray the Indian peasant. The Indian peasant is the hero of all his novels. In novel after novel he has given us a cross-section of the peasantry—the coolie, the Untouchable, the tea-plantation worker, the sepoy, the coppersmith. Anand has probed deep into the sources of the Indian's life. He has seen the forces that shape the lives of the peasants almost with a scientist's eye. He looks on them with the detachment of a realist. He omits nothing, neither the crudeness of their life and outlook nor their deep fatalism. But he sees them also as individuals and human beings coarsened by years of oppression.

In his early novels, Anand is often carried away by his passionate love of the oppressed peasant. Now and again, as in *Untouchable* and *Coolie*, you see his impatience with the arrogant conservatism of the Brahmins running away with him. Their characters get distorted into caricatures. However, in his later works, especially in his trilogy—*The Village, Across the Black Waters, The Sword and the Sickle*—the artist in him asserts itself, and he rises above the intolerance of his earlier novels. He looks on them all, rich and poor, oppressed and oppressor, with equal sympathy and understanding.

In my opinion, this trilogy is the finest and the most balanced of his works. This time the peasant appears as the sepoy. The hero of the story is Lal Singh, a member of the so-called martial races of India. Lal Singh gets into a scrape in his village and runs away from home and joins the army, is drafted abroad to fight the Germans in the war of 1914-18. He is taken prisoner, and finally returns home after the

armistice to join the revolutionary movement in India. Lal Singh, who had a little education at the local mission school, is an intelligent and impressionable lad. He keeps his eyes open and notices the many differences between life in France and in India. Being a peasant he is greatly impressed by the advanced methods of agriculture. 'The land of France is wide and fair, even as the Punjab,' he writes home to his mother, 'and the people are like us too, open and free and loving. This country is full of precious things, such as machine ploughs, steel implements, sheep, cows, and potatoes. The Francis are wonderful cultivators. They plough five times as much land in a day with tractor machines as we do in ten days with a wooden land-scratcher. And they use manures full of medicines such as the Sarkar ought to invent in Hindustan.' When he gets back after the war he is full of the lessons he'd learned from his experiences in Europe, and sets out to realize them at home.

Anand's father was a professional soldier, and Anand, the boy, spent a good deal of his time in the barracks playing with the sepoys and sweepers and talking with them. This explains the remarkable understanding he shows of his sepoy characters. We get in these novels some of the most intimate and complete pictures of the peasantry of the Punjab. Here one sees them foul-mouthed, ignorant, superstitious, servile, the victims of selfish landlords and unscrupulous moneylenders. But beneath their abject fatalism their inherent humanity is not tarnished. In their relations with their friends they are tender and child-like. Their devotion to the ones they love is deep. They have a rugged sense of humour that helps to take the edge off their misery and hardship. It is in this truthfulness of characterization that Anand's superiority over other Indian novelists becomes striking.

So far I have spoken about Anand's great gift of character-drawing. Now I want to say a word about one or two other things that I think are notable in his novels. First, his grasp of the Indian scene, political and economic. The sweep of Anand's vision reaches wider and deeper than Narayan's. Narayan selects a narrow sector: in its safety his art is sufficient. Anand goes to the deepest sources of the peasants' make-up.



He lays bare the complex elements that go to shape his character. The Indian background comes alive in the pattern of the lives of the peasants.

Now for the other point: the collective emotions of the peasants. This is always a difficult thing to bring off in a novel. Raja Rao tried it in *Kanthapura*. But there the characters were simple types and using the grandmother as a mouthpiece was a convenient device. Anand's latest novel, *The Big Heart*, published in 1946, is a powerful study of a group of copper-smiths in Amritsar. New war factories have robbed them of their traditional occupation, and they are out of work and starving. The nominal hero of the novel is a revolutionary who urges them to form a trade union. But the real hero is the artisan community, hating the machine and yet afraid of it. The novel is the story of the impact of the machine on it. The machine upsets the equilibrium of its life. The pressure of new circumstances makes it essential that they readjust themselves. And they achieve it—but only after unnecessary violence. It is this change that Anand paints so penetratingly. Of course the minor characters are given names, but they are merely the several voices of the community—voices expressing the various forces that pull their lives hither and thither. Their reactions register the group's reactions and decide the future of the community.

Anand, as much as Raja Rao and Narayan, has indicated the direction of India's change. They have all told the story, in their own separate ways of course, of the struggle of the Indian people to master their destiny and shape it nearer to the dream of their hearts. There have been numerous novels on India written by Englishmen and English women, some of them biased, others sympathetic. But here for the first time we have the imaginative picture of India drawn by Indians themselves.

# THE DANCE IN INDIA

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NARAYANA MENON

THE dances of India, like the music of India, are as old as Indian culture itself. It bears to European ballet more or less the same type of relationship as Indian music does to European music, and for that matter, very much the same sort of relationship as Indian literature does to that of Europe, or Indian art to European art as a whole. In all these, in the East the insistence seems to be on emotional sincerity as against intellectual sincerity in the West: on the lyrical impulse rather than the dramatic impulse; on intuition rather than argument; speculation rather than reason; on contemplation more than on action. The result is a subjectivism which is opposed to Western objectivism. Many factors are at the root of such a development and it is perhaps beyond the scope of an essay such as this to go into any detailed analysis of the reasons.

All dancing—whether of the East or the West—is made up of stylized movements. This applies both to what we might describe as the ‘pure’ dance as well as the narrative dance which realizes a story or a mood in movement. The fundamental difference between the two schools consists in the way in which a given idea is realized in the dance. In Indian dancing, the dancer (like the musician in Indian music) is the centre, the figurehead of the idea, and the dance, as it were, emanates from him. In European ballet the idea of the dance is projected on the dancers. It is an objective realization of the idea by the creator of the dancer, the choreographer, who uses the dancers as a vehicle for the expression of his ideas. This makes the Indian dancer, within a strictly traditional code, a creative artist in the fullest sense of the word; whereas in European ballet the dancer’s role is an interpretative one, to infuse and bring life to the choreographer’s conception. This also makes Indian dancing essentially a solo affair; even when there is a group of dancers as in the more dramatic forms of

Indian dancing like the *kathakali* of Malabar, the dancing takes the form of a series of solo performances. Groupings are not very important; there is no plastic relationship in the lines which are related purely by their continuity. The wide sweeping lines of the ballet are absent. Minute gestural effects become important.

These gestures—or Mudras—are the essence of Indian dancing. They are a very comprehensive language and any story or incident or any shades of emotion can be satisfactorily expressed through the medium. Their eloquence is the eloquence of poetry, not the realistic eloquence of prose. They suggest, but never imitate. They evoke a mood, but never state it. In classical ballet conventional movements such as an arabesque or entrechat or pirouette are freely used by a choreographer to express certain ideas or types, not to mention the clever and dramatic use of the mime. But here convention often becomes an embarrassment, even an impediment. Even in such a poetic ballet as 'Les Sylphides' the male dancer looks slightly ridiculous. It is this hidebound convention which has led to new growths in the dance styles of Europe—movements led by such dancers as Mary Wigman and Martha Graham, who go outside the conventions of classical ballet to revitalize the new dance. Of course there are the many dancers brought up in the traditional style—Massine, Anthony Tudor—who have infused a new life into a traditional framework. If Massine and Tudor are the equivalents in the Dance of modern composers in music, then Wigman and Graham are the champions of atonality. Indian dancing, particularly in the hands of modern innovators like Rukmini Devi, does attempt a new dynamics. But this is within the purely traditional framework. The traditional language is so rich, so *complete* in fact, that it *helps* the creative artist and does not hamper him. This is the highest form in which tradition should operate in any art. It is the severest test of any tradition.

In details this tradition varies slightly from place to place in India. Its purest and oldest form is the subtle, lyrical *Bharata Natya* of Southern India. This is always executed by one single dancer, a female dancer usually, and a recital lasts about three hours. There is hardly any decor, no changes in the costume.

*Bharata Natya* is a dance *recital* and the programme, as in a music recital, is designed to give sufficient variety to hold the attention of an audience for many hours. The music usually consists of a singer—or singers—and a group of drummers. The sung music really functions like a commentary on the dance, the percussion provides the real dance accompaniment. If the intricacies of rhythm in Indian music escape the uninitiated Westerner, the rhythms of Indian dancing are even more subtle and difficult.

The percussion strongly underlines the dancer's rhythm. With certain set dances and in improvisations within a strict code, the drummer anticipates every step of the dancer, and the result is like two musicians playing in unison, the bells of the dancer's feet synchronizing with the beats of the drummer. There are, on the other hand, lyrical dances where the basic rhythm is kept going as a background to the *abhinaya*—the facial expression. Here, it is the melodic line (rather than the rhythm) that is in unison with the dance.

This *abhinaya*, acting with the facial muscles, is a very important aspect of Indian dancing. A dancer is an actor in the highest sense of the word. Here again the emotion is realized through stylized gestures and controlled movements of the facial muscle—love, heroism, disgust, anger, mirth, terror, pity, wonder, tranquillity—all these emotions have their stylized versions. This is almost like an accurate and exact science. Its creators carefully studied the nature of emotion; the physical stimulants to aesthetic enjoyment; the conditions and themes which produce such enjoyment; its visible signs and results, even its workings on the subconscious mind. The *Natya Sastra*, the great monumental work by Bharata on Indian Dancing goes into all these.

Two dramatic and comparatively recent developments of *Bharata Natya* should be mentioned—the *Kathakali* of Malabar and the *Kathak* dances of Northern India. The two names are somewhat similar, but mean quite different styles.

*Kathakali* literally means story-play. Here the gestures and the technique of *Bharata Natya* are put to a highly dramatic use. Unlike *Bharata Natya*, which is danced by a single dancer, *Kathakali* employs many dancers. It is like a great dance drama,

and its themes are drawn from the great Hindu epics. Performances last a whole night and take place in the open air. If *Bharata Natya* is a subtle, lyrical art, *Kathakali* is vital, dramatic, and exciting. The *Kathak* school—the Northern school—on the other hand, combines both: the vitality of *Kathakali* with the lyricism of *Bharata Natya*.

In all these, history and legend mix; there are even legendary stories of the origin of the dance—legends which explain in parables the essence of the Dance. Brahma 'the great Creator once went into meditation on the four great Vedas, and he thought:

'I shall create this *Natya Veda* with historical representations presenting moral and spiritual truth . . . This will show the proper way of all action to the world that is to be born, and it will contain the essential truth of all the Shastras and will show all the sculpture of form.'

So the Lord created the *Natya Veda* as one born out of the limbs of all the *Vedas*. That which should be read he took from the *Rig Veda*, that which should be sung from the *Sama Veda*, the *Abhinaya* from the *Yejur Veda*, and the *Rasas* from the *Atharva Veda*. And so this beautiful *Natya Veda* came into being from the *Vedas* and the *Upa Vedas*.

# POSTSCRIPT TO THE INDIAN ART EXHIBITION

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FRANCIS WATSON

‘WHAT can one assume in the public?’ The critic whose airy question I happened to overhear at the Burlington House Press View had been examining the second-century Buddhist carvings from the Amaravati tope, which have adorned the main staircase at the British Museum for so long that they, at least, should have been familiar. His companion’s answer was not unexpected ‘Almost nothing.’

A trivial exchange on the face of it. Thinking of the 175,000 paying visitors in eight weeks to the French Tapestries Exhibition at the Victoria and Albert the year before, it seemed an irrelevant one. But it started a train of thought as I moved on through galleries where at each moment a word in the catalogue—Bhuvaneswar, Bodhisatva, Tonk and Kulu and Akbar-Nama—exploded into a star-cluster of memory and association, contributing to the experience of individual enjoyment an element which might or might not be essential but was certainly inescapable. And sure enough, when the first reviews appeared, Eric Newton was found lamenting that the word ‘Saraswati’ meant nothing to him. ‘There is no excellent beauty,’ said Lord Bacon, ‘that hath not some strangeness of proportion.’ But we were given to understand that the choicest beauty of Indian art had too much strangeness to be comfortably contemplated. Some of the most appreciative among the Press-notices could not forbear to strike, at one point or another, the familiar note of unfamiliarity. One or two critics essayed a brief explanation of the difficulties of approach. Others again were inclined to qualify a genuine enthusiasm with a disarming apology for the ignorance on which it was based. And Mr. Newton in the *Sunday Times* more or less threw up his hands and declined the task of appraisal, though in a later issue he apparently offered a brief recantation. So striking

was this timidity among many of the critics that Mr Codrington, one of those chiefly responsible for the exhibition, devoted a good part of a Third Programme broadcast to a plea for art as against iconography. 'Schoolmen do not create art; artists do'

It is a big enough question in all conscience, this of the contribution of specialized knowledge to appreciation. But why was it raised so acutely by the Indian Exhibition? If it is no more than a recrudescence of the 'mysterious East' theme, why were the great Persian and Chinese Exhibitions between the two wars more readily dealt with? I do not recall any critic declaring in the winter of 1930-1 that he had never been to Isfahan and could only fumble at his task, nor did it seem five years later that an insufficient grasp of Taoist metaphysics in the original tongue was an effectual bar to the enjoyment of Chinese art. Indeed in both memorable instances the reviewers, with what now would seem acres of newsprint at their disposal, vied with each other in displaying an easy mastery of their subject. If some of this was the well-disguised result of mugging-up in the weeks preceding Press-Day, then one must conclude that in the autumn of 1947 not many found time, or interest, or courage to mug up Indian art. Yet it is not altogether unmuggable, at all events for the limited space now provided for such subjects by hard-pressed editors. Again, why? What holds us back? For it is beginning to appear that something does. If the answer is given that Persia has traditionally fascinated Englishmen, or that we had been prepared for Chinese pottery and painting by an intensive period of rising market-values, then surely one may murmur that we have been linked with India by historical destiny for the last hundred and fifty years, that generations of our countrymen have served and traded and fought and taught there, and that their published memoirs must form, after theology, one of the largest single slabs of reading-matter in the British Museum Library. The expansion of our artistic horizons in the present century has been altogether phenomenal, but if a vogue for oriental art in general is of recent and dateable development, then one might logically have expected the art of India to be the first, rather than the last, to find fashion.

A history of Indo-British cultural relations could make a fascinating study—a companion-volume, perhaps, to Dennis Kincaid's entertaining *British Social Life in India*. The compiler would certainly have to notice No. 600 in the Burlington House catalogue, an album containing a series of exquisite *Ragas* and *Ragims* (miniature paintings expressing the Hindu musical modes). For this album is from the collection presented to the Bodleian by Archbishop Laud in 1640. Not only the date is interesting—these are the earliest of the trading-days, with territory and Empire undreamed of. The profession of the eminent collector is also worth remarking. In later times than his, missionary zeal would almost inevitably have precluded such connoisseurship in one of his cloth. And though the hymnal injunction to break down every idol has not been carried out by Christians at large in India with the literal iconoclasm of an Aurangzeb (Laud's near contemporary, atoning for his Moghul predecessors' unkoranic patronage of the arts), there is no doubt that the denigration of Hinduism inseparable from the proselytizing attitude has helped in the past to weave the veil between us and the marvellous beauty that has now illuminated a London winter. As chartered idolaters, we can esteem the more the good Archbishop whose innocent eye could dwell with curiosity and delight upon *Ragas* and *Ragims*. (Incidentally, the traveller in India to-day finds the English word 'idol' employed quite unselfconsciously by devout Hindus.)

Anyway, the East India Company's servants who established the very first trading-post at Surat took a chaplain with them, rather for their own spiritual health than for that of the Indians about them—whose beliefs, Parsi as well as Hindu, this chaplain (Henry Lord) detachedly described in his *Discovery of the Bamans*, printed in London in 1630. A copy of this book found its way into the Indian Art Exhibition, not quite incongruously, for it was shown in the large South Room given over to a beguiling background-display of East India Company life. Wondering, perhaps, if Archbishop Laud had any successors, one could catch a glimpse here of some of those eighteenth-century forerunners of Empire who patronised Indian craftsmen, studied Indian languages, not



infrequently married Indian wives, and with the cargoes dispatched to England laid the foundations of the Indian collections now in the British Museum and the Commonwealth Relations Office. There was the prodigious Sir William Jones, for instance, pioneer of Sanskrit learning, translator of the *Sakuntala* (which later inspired Goethe), and even a hymnologist of Indian deities. There was Warren Hastings himself whose famous trial, if it did not extinguish corruption in Anglo-Indian society, does seem to mark the end of dilettantism. For soon we come to the 1830's, to the battle between the 'Orientalists' and the 'Anglicists', to the reforming Governor-General Bentinck (charged by Havell with having contemplated the sale of the Taj Mahal for its material) and to Macaulay, whose famous minute on education lives in memory by the sturdy declaration that 'a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia'.

This is not quite fair. Bentinck left a name honoured in India and Macaulay took care to state that he was accepting Oriental culture 'at the value of the Orientalists themselves'. The move to introduce English education, in which Bentinck and Macaulay were the instruments of an aroused public opinion at home, was a popular one among Indians, and its political and social effects were of course enormous. The tutelary position once established, the very successes of Indians by western standards confirmed those standards in their ascendancy; and while British administrators, with increasing work, reduced the range of their interests, the public in England gradually learned to take a pride in the conception of 'the white man's burden' which, though it did not exclude romantic and exotic sentiment, offered no grounds for an interest in Asiatic civilization for its own sake. The light to lighten the Gentiles (*Gentios*, once used for Hindus, is probably cognate) threw all else into shadow.

Down to Tagore on his deathbed and Nehru in his prison essays, Indians have paid grateful tribute to the language that not only made them free of progressive English political thought but opened the doors to all that the busy and scientific West had to offer. Plato and Karl Marx were read

in English, as well as Shakespeare, Shelley, and John Stuart Mill. We in our turn have to acknowledge the enrichment of English literature by Indians, and their preservation of standards of eloquence that we are fast relinquishing. But in the territory of the arts the case was different. What, indeed, had Victorian England to offer to the Indian eye, or to seek at the hands of the Indian artist? Looking back, it seems inevitable that the primacy of western standards in this field should have been corrupting on the one hand and barren of return on the other. Was it that eighteenth-century Englishmen could better appreciate the culture of India because they had no secret misgivings as to their own?

And so to Ruskin. His excuse is that he had seen next to nothing of any quality in the subject of his denunciation, but his words are these. Indian art, he said, indicates that 'the people who practise it are cut off from all possible sources of healthy knowledge or natural delight, that they have wilfully sealed up and put aside the entire volume of the world and have nothing to read, nothing to dwell upon but that imagination of the thoughts of their hearts, of which we are told that "it is only evil continually"'. Over the whole spectacle of creation they have thrown a veil in which there is no rent. For them no stars peep through the blanket of the dark, for them neither their heaven shines nor their mountains rise, for them the flowers do not blossom, for them the creatures of field and forest do not live. They lie bound in the dungeon of their own corruption, encompassed only by doleful phantoms, or by spectral vacancy.'

At least we can now refute that, *seriatim* and *in extenso*. What would an ordinary spectator, walking through the Indian Art Exhibition of 1947-8, have made of Ruskin's paragraph? Let us admit that there are still some who, confronted by the bronze masterpieces of Southern India, the Shaivite Dance of Life that even for the West has become symbolic, are hindered in their recognition of poise, of craftsmanship, of exalted conception, by something on the surface of conscience that keeps nagging about four arms. To lance this blister it should surely be sufficient to ponder for five minutes the more familiar problems of Christian

iconography—for example that of representing the apocalyptic angel's feathered limbs 'with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.' For the rest, the central text of Ruskin's sermon is manifestly heretical. Natural delight is everywhere. Indeed the more we study the prolonged Indian achievement, the more we dig up, and look at, and photograph, and read and write about, the more clearly do we see human and individual feeling breaking through the hieratic mould, whether of the elaborate aesthetic prescriptions of the Hindu tradition or of the puritanic prohibitions of Islam. And then . . . the volume of the world, the blossoming flowers, the creatures of field and forest. They were everywhere at Burlington House, portrayed with a love and sympathy instantly recognizable. Indeed the record is unrivalled by anything that could be shown in the same compass; a record beginning forty centuries ago with the seals of Mohenjo-Daro, more striking than their Sumerian counterparts; and thence moving through the direct and vivid natural history of the Bharhut and Sanchi reliefs, appealing echoes of the meeting of folklore and franciscanism in the great Buddha cycle. Frieze upon frieze of the mediaeval Hindu temples bear further witness, before ever we come to the marvellous flowering of Indian miniature-painting. The chameleon of Jehangir's court-painter Mansur, which attracted such delighted notice at Burlington House, was from Windsor Castle—can Ruskin have seen it, or was it then merely labelled 'Persian', which it manifestly is not? A chameleon is perhaps a notable oddity, but what of the birds, the deer, the squirrels, the horses, and of course the elephants? Many were painted for their own sake alone, but among all those six hundred drawings and paintings in the Exhibition, selected from so many thousands, and those thousands the survivors of a cornucopial beauty much wasted by violent history, how seldom is man isolated from his fellow-creatures! Even a Moghul portrait shows us as often as not a flower in the hand, token of that garden-life of the Emperors between campaigns, where flowers and birds and animals made so much of the image-world that they thought worthy of bequest to us. And as their power crumbled the flowers and birds and

animals were welcomed into the gay pastorals of eighteenth-century Rajasthan, Basholi, and Kangra.

What then, beyond a partly excusable ignorance, moved Ruskin to such misdirected thunders of denunciation? I cannot help thinking that the date of his utterance is significant. The lecture on 'The Deteriorative Power of Conventional Art' from which it is quoted was delivered in Kensington in 1858, the year following the Indian Mutiny. Ruskin's horrified reaction to the Mutiny can be read in *The Two Paths*, published in the same year, and there is no reason to think that anyone in his audience found difficulty in believing in the general barbarism of the people of India. A century after Plassey, the Mutiny marks the well-known watershed. Politically it was followed by Queen Victoria's assumption of sovereignty, socially by a tragic estrangement between the handful of British men and women in India and the Queen's multitudinous new subjects—tragic because so much was achieved by both peoples, despite the estrangement, as to leave a sad irony in the might-have-been. In England, certainly, the impressions of 1857 died hard. I do not know what Indian history, if any, finds a place in the crowded curricula of English schools to-day, but few of my own generation can escape without a conscious effort the horrific introduction to things Indian of our childhood; which long afterwards, when for the first time I read the word CAWN-PORE as the train drew into the station in the early morning, stabbed back at me from the darkness of memory. Perhaps they will now revise the anglicised orthography and call it Khanpur, which would help.

All this ought, no doubt, to be beside the point, as easily overlooked as the attempts to ban Beethoven in World War I. But it was by no means irrelevant to Ruskin. And since we cannot all look upon the mutual impact of East and West from the stratospheric vantage-point of a Toynbee, but must regard it as something of possible moment to any one of us, perhaps we should frankly face, if only to exorcise, an element in our attitude to India for which no one can finally be blamed. There has been (some would say especially among women, but that would make a different article) a pathological

shrinking, rationalized in all sorts of ways, and in some cases neither cured nor concealed in contacts made in India. To sensitive and cultured Indians this has naturally been painful, nor has it always been a one-way traffic. Pandit Nehru, in his *Discovery of India*, quotes Sir Osbert Sitwell as writing, as recently as 1941 that 'the idea of India, despite its manifold marvels, continued to be repellent'. But the classic example of this curious horror, not unmixed with awe, comes from a pre-Mutiny source 'I was stared at, hooted at, grinned at, chattered at, by monkeys, by paroquets, by cockatoos I ran into pagodas, and was fixed for centuries at the summit, or in secret rooms, I was the idol, I was sacrificed I fled from the wrath of Brama through all the forests of Asia; Vishnu hated me; Seeva lay in wait for me . . .'

De Quincey's explanation of these opium-images of May, 1818, is highly interesting. 'Southern Asia, in general, is the seat of awful images and associations. As the cradle of the human race, if on no other ground, it would have a dim, reverential feeling connected with it. But there are other reasons. No man can pretend that the wild, barbarous, and capricious superstitions of Africa, or of savage tribes elsewhere, affect him in the way that he is affected by the ancient, cruel, and elaborate religions of Hindustan. The mere antiquity of Asiatic things, of their institutions, histories, above all of their mythologies, etc., is so impressive, that to me the vast age of the race and name overpowers the sense of youth in the individual.'

In De Quincey's repulsion there is no vestige of that contempt in which, it must be conceded, an instinctive fear of the East has in particular cases masqueraded. To the contrary, it springs from reverential awe; and one thinks also of D. H. Lawrence, attracted at a distance, but dismayed on contact, by the fecund tide of humanity in Southern Asia. It is a complex inviting examination (Jung did not get far with it), but here I can only scratch the surface, remembering the woman who told me the other day that she had been thrilled by the Burlington House Exhibition once she had conquered an initial revulsion based, apparently, on the misapprehension that 'all their gods are so fat'; or the very

distinguished art expert who tried to translate his uneasiness into a precept with the remark that 'sensuality is not enough'.

Some of the strands of which the barrier has been woven are now, praise be, wearing thin, so that, if we will, we have only to look. And despite the great difficulties that had to be faced at this point of history in getting a first-class exhibition of Indian art to London it was perhaps a good moment to carry out the project. We are no longer a churchgoing nation, and whatever the loss in other respects, we at least do not contemplate the art of a non-Christian people through the eyes of Bishop Heber. We are no longer responsible through Parliament for the governance of India: the full psychological effects of that change, a more gradual one than the events of 1947 might seem to indicate, cannot all appear at once, but it gives *us* a liberty that even an enlightened Victorian could not enjoy. We have supped full of horrors and are no longer capable of being shocked in quite the way that good men were shocked ninety years ago by a local and violent breach of the *Pax Britannica* (as for Indians, they had already by 1918 seen the progressive West in a fresh light, and our European collective conscience, if there is such a thing, has not found much salve since then). We are still, I imagine, dogged by a traditional puritanism, and have to some extent communicated it to those who came within the widening scope of Macaulay's Education Act (I remember, on my way to Kanarak, meeting an Indian whose reaction to the magnificent erotic sculpture of the sun temple there was exactly what one would expect of an English commercial traveller on a trip to Paris.) But we are certainly very much freer than were our grandfathers and grandmothers to discuss the phallic element, and even to grope our way towards a genuine appreciation of it. The organizers of the Indian Exhibition seem to have been a little cautious in this respect. Only one of the early palm-leaf manuscripts, and that on particular inspection, allowed the spectator to penetrate to that territory of Hinduism which has caused the compilers of otherwise detailed western guidebooks so much embarrassment. But the astonishing Yakshi from Patna in Gallery I,

with a face that you might meet in Oxford Street and a bosom of polished exuberance, succeeded in inviting critics and public to an unashamed enjoyment of that transfiguration of the lust of living which runs through the masterly rhythms of Indian sculpture

And then again we have begun to teach ourselves, aided by the wealth that the archaeologist and the camera have combined to give us from all over the world, to abandon a snobbery of time equally with that of place. There was a timelessness about the galleries of Burlington House which, in the absence of a catalogue, would have had most spectators floundering. That mysterious and highly developed Indus Valley culture gives us two tiny torsos of dancers of which, as John Irwin writes in the Exhibition handbook *Indian Art*, 'the general features and quality of modelling are far closer to the sculpture of the Hellenistic age, 2,000 years later, than to anything yet found at prehistoric sites in other parts of the world.' Amongst the Indo-Greek, or more correctly Indo-Roman, Gandhara sculpture (relegated to a small gallery in obedience to its comparative depreciation in critical esteem), you could find *das ewige Antlitz*—heads that might have come from a Gothic bracket or a Rococo boudoir or a villa in Gaul. Thus prepared to look at things for their own sake, one could move to the greater works of sculpture, consult the references to date Kushan and Gupta, the Buddhistic caves and the first structural temples and then, confronted by some fragment in which voluptuous writhing was controlled to utter peace, abandon the catalogue and fall back (if one must have words) upon the passage in *Burnt Norton* which begins

*At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;  
and ends, like an inscription for a bronze Nataraja,*

*Except for the point, the still point,  
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.*

That we have come so far from Ruskin is in great measure, it is reassuring to observe, creditable to our own countrymen. It was E. B. Havell, of the Calcutta School of Art, who took the lead in that revival which (whatever one may think of its more decadent by-products) taught Indians once more to

look at their own artistic heritage with their own eyes, and at the same time shouted at us in England that we had been neglecting something. The first edition of his book *Indian Painting and Sculpture*, published in 1907, assembled in an appendix a choice collection of British solecisms on Indian art of which Ruskin's defamation was only one. It is significant that twenty years later the new edition of Havell's book had to be entirely re-written and re-illustrated, so much had in the interval been discovered or freshly assessed. There have always been individual Englishmen in India who could rescue and admire the evidences of a great cultural heritage. What was important, at all events during the half-century that followed the inauguration of Imperialism, was what the Government did. The antiquarian outlook is not the best foster-mother of art, but if the conduct of official art-schools and the design of official buildings must be set on the debit side of our balance-sheet, something is redressed by the history of the Archaeological Department in India, established by Canning in 1860 under the direction of Sir Alexander Cunningham.

Cunningham's impressive survey, covering the States as well as British India, was followed by a lean period, ended by the energy of Curzon at the turn of the century. A hint to empire-builders might be found in the reputation that clings to Curzon's name in India. His political unpopularity and his personal arrogance are almost forgotten. What is remembered is that he respected, preserved and enlarged the country's artistic wealth. His Director-General of Archaeology was Sir John Marshall; and it was Marshall who, after exploring, excavating, and conserving the sites surveyed by Cunningham, took his spade to Mohenjo-daro and extended the visible record of Indian civilization by fifteen centuries. These things made a difference. Together with the revived esteem for ancient learning encouraged by Mrs. Besant and the Theosophists, they helped enormously to rebuild Indian self-respect. On that memorable Friday in August, 1947, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, broadcasting from New Delhi, offered India's gratitude to 'the scholars of Europe who restored to us our pride in our ancient culture, to the antiquarians, to



the archaeologists who have discovered for us our own hidden cities '.

Mrs. Naidu is now the Governor of one of the Provinces of the Dominion of India Mohenjo-daro and the other Indus Valley sites, as well as the field of Gandhara sculpture, are in Pakistan. But the Taj Mahal, the Moghul cities of Delhi and Agra and Jaunpur, the site of the Muslim University at Aligarh, remain on the Indian side of the new border. That is why the Exhibition at Burlington House, projected many years ago and interrupted by the war, had hurriedly and clumsily to be retitled 'Exhibition of Art chiefly from the Dominions of India and Pakistan.' If I have had to use the word 'India', for we have no other, to describe the whole sub-continent from the Himalayas to Cape Cormorin and from Quetta to Chittagong, that should imply no misunderstanding of the political necessities that have drawn new boundary-lines. To trace the threads in the rich pattern of the art of this huge area, Buddhist and Brahmanical, Islamic, Sikh, Jain, even Christian, would have been a fascinating exercise, though in fact the purely religious influence has been over-emphasized in the past. But to speak of separate heritages for the geographical entities of to-day's Pakistan and India would be grossly misleading, and would do no service to the national pride of either State. Pakistanis and Indians may alike derive satisfaction from the belated recognition offered at Burlington House. For us it has been an opportunity which will not quickly come again.

# THE HARTAL

(A Chapter from a Novel in progress)

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S. MENON MARATH

EXCEPT for about thirty, every one had come out of the class-rooms. The four hundred-odd students milled around in the grounds of the College, their throng pressed into some semblance of shape where the angles of the buildings cut into them or the straight sweep of the verandahs drew their edges into a clean line. The little boys jostled and elbowed towards the western front of the College in order to get a glimpse of the leaders of the strike. Many of them were only dimly aware of the reason for this unusual holiday gained by the force of their will. The handsome-faced Prince of Wales—for handsome he looked in his pictures in their text-books—had arrived in India, and they must show that they didn't want him. The day had hardly commenced when whispered word came that they should come out of the class-rooms. Without hesitation they sprang to their feet and shuffled out. The undone homework wouldn't humiliate to-day, at any rate; the impositions could wait with it. There wouldn't be any clouts or canings. For one day the arm would be free of olive-coloured bruises and the masters' fingers could rest.

Three or four boys jumped on to a verandah and yelled through the windows into the rooms where a stray boy or two sat in defiance of the strike. 'Cowards, cheap worthless cowards, come out. Come out and show that you are not afraid, that you are not slaves.' The lads tried to look brave and dignified on the forms. 'You dirty Pattars, we'll break your necks for you to-morrow.'

'Ssh, no violence,' admonished an older student.

In the narrow strip of ground facing the backwaters the crowd, made up of older boys, was thickest. White shirts covered their bodies, the tails of which hung outside the mundus. The lecturers and masters stood on the verandahs

gazing at the students helplessly. The younger ones among them smiled in sympathy, while the others looked bewildered.

From his stance beside the little disused well Gopalan regarded the surging crowd and an emotion such as he had never felt before upcurved in him biting where the chest dipped to give way to the shoulders. Joy quivered like anguish across his breast jerking his breath.

He opened his lungs and thundered. 'Bharatha mata ki jai. Long live the Motherland.'

From a hundred throats the echo tore the air. 'Bharatha mata ki jai. Mahatma Gandhi ki jai.'

All at once the expression of taut expectation fell from their faces. Like the sudden crash of a breeze among leaves their voices rustled in the sun. Once the spontaneous exodus from the building had been completed and they had coalesced to form the large mass that broke against the imperturbable solidness of the buildings, they felt deflated and rather lost. With hardly any organizing the hartal had been achieved. The national resolve had been carried out. But they were loathe to disperse. They scanned the faces of their neighbours, the restless tide of enthusiasm welling up in them seeking release. Pride towered in their hearts, pride that the response was so full, pride that at that moment their tiny little town, hemmed in from the rest of India by mountains, had rallied to show its unity with the rest of the Motherland.

With a bound Gopalan cleared the few steps and was on the verandah. The little group of masters moved away as though willingly surrendering the place to him. 'Friends,' he said, his voice dim with a hint of huskiness. 'Friends, the turn-out has been splendid. Only a few faint-hearts have stayed in sucking up to the authorities. We can well do without them. The triumph is ours, theirs the shame. At this very minute the whole of our beloved land is greeting the Prince of Wales with the blackness of our contempt and anger. The markets will be empty, the shops will be barred and locked. Our hearts will be grim with the determination to oust the British. . . . Let's cheer our great leader Gandhiji.' Fervent, passionate cheers broke out from them, scores of cheers for the dozens of leaders, national and local. 'Let's make it a real hartal, a

great hartal. We will make a huge bonfire of foreign cloth. We will put to the flames the fabric which is the symbol of our enslavement. Detachments will go round the town and collect them and bring them to the beach.'

As he spoke the huskiness in his voice faded away, and it rang clear, persuasive and forceful, the walls on either side softly echoing its modulations. His close friends stood immediately in front of him, their heads tilted up towards him

'Our Gopalan can certainly put over the stuff,' whispered Govindan to his companions. A sneaking pride in his friend hushed in his heart the buzz of envy. He would have given anything to be on that red-tiled verandah speaking to the whole school, ignoring the lecturers who huddled in the doors. Maybe he would have too if Gopalan hadn't got there first

'Gopalan won't find my old pop barring and locking his shop,' Matthal spoke above a whisper, his harsh voice audible to the others around him.

'Stop that idiotic boasting,' snapped Govindan. 'Why don't you go and sit with those rats inside?'

'Shut up,' growled Matthal. 'I said, my father'

When Gopalan finished a volley of cheers burst again, pelting the high walls of the buildings, prizing out from the roofs and the eaves the swallows and the pigeons and scaring them into flight. The boys tumbled into the road, some climbing over the iron railings that fenced off the College grounds. The scores of onlookers followed the streaming breakers of youngsters towards the beach.

One boy tore off his shirt and flung it on the grass. At once other shirts sailed after it settling on the grass in an untidy heap. Soon strips of white clothing flapped over the heads of the crowd careering towards the mounting pile. Someone knelt on the ground and threw a lighted match on to the collection of foreign cloth. A tongue of flame shot up, shaped like a trowel, sheer and steady. While its base flung farther and farther outwards its tip prodded a ledge made up by a collar until it caught fire. White acrid smoke rose towards the sky, shaped like hands clasped in prayer. The heat became

quite perceptible and the tight ring of people withdrew reluctantly. The flames crept round, leaving here and there areas of charred clothing over which crawled and twisted little worms of fire.

From time to time student volunteers, mostly little boys, brought in fresh loads of cloth of foreign manufacture and pushed into the solid wall of spectators crying, gangway, gangway, and deposited them on the flaming mound, their faces tense with seriousness and illumined with joy born out of concrete achievement.

Detachments of boys formed spontaneously. With little need for persuasion they called together their mates and were off into the streets of the neighbourhood. A few held back because they wanted to be near the bonfire, now growing bigger, and the crowd that kept on growing.

The news of the boycott by the students had already seeped into the core of the town and was rapidly spreading to the farther reaches. In the houses to which the boys went the reception was generally friendly. The householders regarded the hartal as the result of the whimsicality of youth, reluctant to look upon it as small voice of response in the nation-wide shout of protest. They knew most of the boys and they were not willing to invest their pranks with any consciousness of purpose or seriousness. Some of them, however, vaguely felt that a turn-out of this size did not happen merely because the youngsters were up to a lark.

It was only very rarely that the boys received a whole mundu or shirt for their collection. Nearly always it was a rag of a shirt or a frayed strip of cloth that came out of the wooden boxes smelling of musk and camphor. The really valuable articles of clothing, the bulk of which was made from foreign mill cloth, nobody was foolish enough to give away to be burnt. They were wealth accrued by hard work.

Presently students could be seen emerging from the various streets and marching down to the beach, carrying bundles of cloth. The excited, impatient ones just wrapped their arms round unwieldy heaps of clothing pressed against their torso, whilst others fashioned neat bundles which they slung over their shoulders. The collecting squads scoured the streets

indefatigably until it was late in the afternoon, their ardour immunizing them against hunger and physical weariness.

Several policemen had arrived on the scene, the scarlet of their turbans and the khaki of their tunic and breeches relieving the white and brown monotone of the gathering. They hung about undecided, watching the crowd, which was too preoccupied to pay much attention to them, or the smoke that softly rolled and trundled upwards. From across the road the officials leaned out of the windows of the Government offices unable to make up their minds about the significance of this mad idea of the students.

A few beggars with little more than the dirtiest of rags tied round their loins loitered where the crowd was thinnest trying to waylay the students who brought the bundles up to the fire.

'Don't burn the clothes, masters,' they implored in voices that did not hide their frantic dismay at what was going on. 'May God protect and preserve you. Give them to us.'

A young Christian woman held a tiny baby towards them crying: 'Masters, give something to cover this little thing at night. Why burn them, masters?'

Another woman who had a large festering abscess on her thigh jumped forward to seize a length of clothing from a boy. She was so sparsely covered that her brusque movement exposed her loins.

'Don't you dare touch it, you filthy beggar woman,' shouted the boy, dashing away from her at a trot.

'Why not give them away to these beggars?' a voice indignantly questioned. 'Where's the sense in burning them?'

A policeman standing by did not know whose side to take, the organizers of the bonfire or the beggars. Unable to find a way out of the quandary, he quietly ignored the whole thing.

'Six annas it cost me to get a shirt made for my son,' said a man to another beside him. 'Look at him now minus the shirt.'

'Gone with the others into the fire.'

'Money doesn't grow on trees. Had to sweat to give him that luxury. Of course it is a grand joke for these lunatics

to fling it into the fire. All the handiwork of that trouble-maker Gandhi. I'll give him something to cool off when he comes home.'

A breeze sprang from the sea flattening the pillar of smoke and lashing it against the faces and bodies of the spectators. The boys coughed and swayed backwards. Splotches of grey clouds ambled up the horizon to suck up the mauve light spreading from the west. Caught in the casurina fronds the breeze moaned.

The last white rag had been burnt to a grey white mass that now smoked feebly. The cries of the beggars had died down and the voices of the dismissing crowd hung like an uneven ceiling over the beach. As the throng retreated the policemen closed round what was left of the bonfire.

## CONVERSATION WITH CADENZA

by B. RAJAN

You are because I lived you out of dust.  
When I created you as foil to know  
Metallic falls of passion on my mirror  
I shared the closing of your death to silence.

You are completion as I contemplate,  
As I foresee you as antagonist,  
To your soliloquy, as I am poseur  
To all protections loaned and trivial.

Consider me as statement and as danger.  
You are the premise I detach within  
Yet mine so much that never act of murder  
Can set me free from your devising heart.

## POETRY

I have been faithful to you in all fashions,  
Turned all my silences into your dancing,  
Furnished cupidity with metaphors,  
I have created you in each god's image.

Yet each god is because you will his nature.  
Each is proposal of your passion; you  
Are passion of them all. When you are not  
The dying of all myths reports your silence.

So as I love you, your substantial ghost,  
Your mockery in poems, your reproof,  
There is no thought of you except in mirrors.  
Closest to you I am forever exile

And though all countries speak your idiom,  
All loves tell of your beauty by report,  
Seek and protect your monarchy in landscapes,  
There is no truth of poetry can live you.

Silence is not known in the death of speech,  
The failure or the flickerings of music.  
Silence is term of the heart's desolate journey  
Deep as downfall to vision's outer outmost.

Silence is born to that I venture in.  
When all restraints of poetry have faded  
I come back to your strange and violent centre  
From which the summoning of myths began.

## THE MAN WHO HAS NO MUSIC

by B. RAJAN

The fault lies with an under-nourished man  
Who standing up has made himself unusual.



Talking of many things but mostly  
 Of the future that includes him like a grin,  
 Of corridors fuddled with loud reports,  
 Inkpots, flares and flails of threshing machinery,  
 The new model citizen clad in kudos  
 Emerges from the montage of his past,  
 Prefabricated, like a poem struts,  
 Bracketing off the unsaid  
 That most unnatural bear who looks behind him

The ruminations of the organ grinder  
 Jostle like posters on the gaunt façade.  
 The millennium jumps screaming out of a window.  
 The man who has no music in his heart  
 Goes home nonchalantly to suet pudding

The man who has no music in himself  
 Flashes the photographed smile, the cliché image,  
 Types himself out on a stencil  
 And says 'don't know' to the appropriate question.

This man can be allowed for, disconnected  
 The fault lies with a most unnatural man  
 Who leapt into a pool and shouted *Murder!*

## THE POET

by B RAJAN

I knew him for his voice was soft and low  
 A thing not meet in any politician  
 Who needs equipment of new languages,  
 Speech to explore and profiteer thereafter.  
 I knew him for his voice was sweet and low  
 And did discourse most excellently willing.

## POETRY

Mute of all ornaments, conveyed to fact  
Accented speech became the accents of  
All feelings, the evasions of despair  
Propose themselves, imply fresh ravages.  
Tranquillity sustains a private hell.  
And sentences of stone will issue after

A man who murders knows tranquillity.  
Peace comes within a corridor, a country,  
The single, the obsessive terminus,  
The mind's clear logic brilliantly converging.  
The true audacity is not to kill  
Or punctuate the pause with perfect killing.

The true audacity selects despair,  
So deep despair that never action raises,  
A man seeks out the sentences of stone.  
To die is to be true beyond recalling.  
A man kills anger on the edge of darkness  
Where all perfections find themselves surmised.

Death of all voyagers, familiar faces,  
Is what we value most, because we are  
Annihilation is the poem's ending.  
A poem lives beyond the roots of space,  
The definition of its death and darkness,  
The seizing of such poems is to be.

The death of all such poems will enact you  
And darkness sets you free beyond restraint.  
To be is to be true beyond belief,  
Truest to love whom your perfections sully.  
A poem lives beyond its ecstasy  
And love in truth restores its benediction.

# THE TRACTOR AND THE CORN GODDESS

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MULK RAJ ANAND

My uncle Chajju it was who really caused most of the trouble about the tractor. Of course, not being a devout person he was not the person who raised the slogans 'Religion in Danger', 'The Corn-Goddess has been insulted', 'No truck with this Tractor,' 'the invention of the Devil,' and so forth. In fact, as soon as the affair began to assume the form of a Hindu Muslim issue, he literally put his foot down on the machine and very proudly had himself photographed, the back of a tiger which a Shikari has actually shot. Nevertheless, it was a phrase of his which was responsible for the whole rumpus, or rather a great deal of it.

The facts of the case, which has assumed the significance of a legendry happening in our parts, were these. When the big landlord of our village, the Nawab Sahib of Bhagira, died, his only son, Nawabsada Mumtaz Ali Khan, who was reputed to be a worthless, irresponsible fool addicted to such European habits as bad company and drink, came home from abroad and started to behave in a manner which most people thought was quite mad, or, to say the least, somewhat strange. For, in the old days when a Zamindar died, his son and heir generally levied a tax for the funeral expenses from the peasants and followed it up by levying another tax still for the motors and the horses he had brought and generally made the peasants aware of the advent of a new order. But on his arrival Nawabsada Mumtaz Ali Khan issued a proclamation that the sum of seven lakhs, which had accrued through the illegal dues of the previous year would be distributed equally to all the peasants of his seven villages and that anyone who came to see him and put token money at his feet before making his plea, would not be listened to at all, and that uncle Chajju, who was the ringleader of the 'goondas' of our parts and had been exiled, was to be allowed to come back.

Most of the peasants, whose father, grandfathers and great grandfathers had been known to pay *Nazrana*, though secretly happy at being relieved of illegal exactions, still thought that it was bad form on the part of the new Nawab and a breach of the old custom, for they said, 'after all the Zamindar is in the position of a ma-bap to us' And uncle Chajju came back thumping his chest like Googa, the famous wrestler, the Rustum of Hind, and declared that the new landlord was simply yellow and frightened of him.

When Mumtaz announced his next set of reforms, that he intended, by deed poll, to renounce all rights to his land and formed a coop in which all the tenants had equal shares, there came various deputations from the elders of the villages, relations and friends to restrain him from his insanity before the papers finally went through. The Deputy Commissioner of the area called the errant boy to him and reprimanded him severely for betraying the trust reposed in him by his forefathers, the community, and the Sarkar. And, needless to say, the papers were annulled and the reforms were not executed.

Of course, Mumtaz was nothing if he was not a stubborn mule, once he had got hold of a notion in his head. And he began a long series of debates with the Sarkar about his right to divest himself of the land and yet avoid a court of wards being imposed on him. But while this matter was still dragging on and all kinds of opinions, good and bad, were being expressed by people about the Nawab's strange behaviour, he brought in that tractor which caused the biggest crisis of all.

Certainly Mumtaz had chosen the wrong moment to introduce this gadget on his estate. For, what with the months of talk about the new-fangled ideas which he had brought from Europe, and adverse comments on the long-haired, unkempt dishevelled men and women, called 'Comrades', who went in and out of the 'big home' day and night, his reputation was in that state of chaos when one more error would lead to a final showdown. Perhaps he forgot about the fate of Amir Amanullah of Afghanistan. Or, maybe, he modelled himself on Mustapha Kemal. At any rate, he only

escaped by the skin of his teeth and he ought to be grateful that he is alive to-day.

The actual incident happened under the banyan tree just outside the big home one morning. The giant tractor had been fetched about eleven o'clock from the railway station by Comrade Abdul Hamid, the engineer. Abdul Hamid brought the monster engine not across the main road, which is mostly empty except for straggling pedestrians, but through the fields of the estate when the peasants were busy ploughing for the Rabbī harvest, and, as the machine furrowed the earth deeply before it came to rest at Mumtaz's door, the peasants gathered from all sides, chased the tractor, some shouting, some just staring, some whispering to each other, all aghast with wonder or fear at this new monstrosity which had appeared in their lives and which threatened to do something to them, they knew not what.

It was at that juncture that uncle Chajju took the lead in the crisis. By one expletive he crystallized the feelings of all of them.

'Rape-mother!' he said caustically, even as he sat smoking the hubble-bubble under the banyan tree.

'That's right,' old Phagu chimed in. 'I hear it tore up the earth as it came along.'

'The earth then has been desecrated!' said Shambhu Nath, the Brahmin priest.

'Han, the Corn-goddess, the mother, the giver of all food, has been raped!' said his devotee Dhunni Bhagat running up behind him.

'Toba! Toba!' said the Maulvi of the mosque rolling his eyeballs and touching his ears under his green turban.

'Rape-mother!' repeated uncle Chajju. 'Why doesn't this boy Mumtaz come out and tell us what is in his mind, the secretive one. What is his game?' And he wore a quizzical expression on his frank face, which was more the index of a hurt pride than anything else, almost as though being an open-minded, hearty old rogue he resented that fact that Mumtaz had not taken him into his confidence.

'I hear,' said Jodha, the oldest peasant of the village, 'that as the White race has never possessed the Shiva-Shakti which

was in the sinews of our people, they have been inventing all kinds of artificial medicines to make themselves potent. If it is true, what Dhunni Bhagat says that the Corn-Goddess has been raped, then this instrument ought to be sent back across the seas to the perverts who have invented it . . . Why, our religion, our shame is involved! Darkness has descended over the earth. What are things coming to? That our boys should be supposed to be so weak that they can't plough the land with the good old wooden plough! That I should have lived to see this insult to our race!

'Ohe Chup Kar, Baba!' said Chajju 'It is not your voice we want to hear, but that of this young landlord of ours.'

'Toba! Toba!' whispered the Maulvi rolling his eyes and touching his ears

'Why are you touching your ears and whispering because we have spoken the truth!' said devotee Dhunni Bhagat. 'You are very shocked at our language but seem not to care that our mother earth, the Corn-Goddess, has been desecrated.'

'To be sure, it is a question of religion,' said Shambu Nath. 'No Hindu landlord would have brought an artificial instrument like this to tear up the earth of a Muhammadan village.'

'To be sure!' said Tirath, a crochety old shopkeeper, 'Our religion has been despoiled.'

'Ohe Chup, stop this kind of foolish talk and call that young son of a gun to come and explain to us what he has inflicted on us,' counselled uncle Chajju.

'To be sure! To be sure!' said one of the young peasants, 'It is probably an electric machine, with power stored in its belly,' said another

'Uncle Chajju is right—we must know what it is for!' opined yet another and tried to touch the tractor ever so gingerly.

'Ohe careful, Ohe careful, it is the magic of Shiva Shakti in a new form,' speculated Jodha. 'The invention of the ferungis who had weakened our race. You might die of the touch as the crows on that electric wire die every day.'

'Our Mahatma had already warned us against such machines,' said Dhunni Bhagat. 'We will not stand for the rape of the Corn-Goddess, specially under Congress Raj—'

At that instant Abdul Hamid, the engineer, emerged from the big house.

'Now then, come and tell us your meaning in bringing this here,' challenged uncle Chajju.

'Get away, get away, don't crowd round the tractor!' said Hamid arrogantly, 'Nawab Sahib is coming.'

'Ohe look, folks, our religion has been despoiled!' shouted Dhunni. 'And he talks like this Our Corn-Goddess . . .'

'Yes, there is leather on it, I am sure, somewhere,' added Shambu.

'Go, go, lentil eaters,' shouted Hamid.

'Don't you insult the priest of the Corn-Goddess after you have trampled upon her body!' said Dhunni

'Don't you bark,' said Hamid, measuring himself up against the devotee, with his torso stretched tight.

'Toba! Toba!' sighed the Maulvi and wagged his beard.

'Come, come, boys,' counselled uncle Chajju. 'There is no talk of religion or the Corn-Goddess or anything like that. All we want to know is what is this machine, how it is going to be used and what it is made of . . .'

'To be sure, to be sure, uncle Chajju is right, that is what we want,' said the boys of the village.

'I can settle that easily,' said the Nawab craning his head behind the knot of men who had gathered round Hamid, the engineer. 'That is a tractor—that is what it is called.'

'So it is the rape-mother tractor!' said Chajju partially satisfied.

'It has despoiled the body of our mother, the Corn-Goddess!' shouted Dhunni.

'It has ruined our religion,' said Shambu.

'We will have no truck with this tractor,' said Jodha.

'Toba! Toba!' said the Maulvi.

'Ohe, stop this loose talk,' said uncle Chajju. 'Let him explain now, let him talk since he has broken his vow of silence, the shy boy!'

'Well, it is a machine which can do the work of a hundred bullocks in one hour. It will till the land of all our seven villages in a fraction of the time that it now takes us to plough it.'

'Are you sure it is not a gari with hidden guns in it?' asked Chajju. 'You haven't brought it to shoot us down with, have you?'

'There is probably imprisoned here all the Shiva Shakti which the white race has robbed us of during their rule here,' said old Jodha

'There is magic power in it!' said Phagu.

'Jinns,' said another peasant.

'Bhuts?' said yet another.

'Don't be so suspicious brothers,' said the Nawab. 'It is all for your good that I have brought it. It is only iron and steel, so tempered as to plough the land quickly'

'I would like it to be taken to pieces before I can believe that there is no magic in it' said Phagu. 'And Jinns and Bhuts?'

'Ohe it is the Shiva Shakti, fools!' assured Jodha.

'It is all right so long as there is not a gun concealed in it,' said Chajju. 'That is all I am concerned with, for I am a man of peace.'

At that there was loud laughter, for my uncle Chajju is too well known as a cantankerous quarrelsome creature to be altogether accepted at his own valuation as a man of peace

'Well,' said the landlord after the amusement had subsided, but before the atmosphere of goodwill built up at the expense of Chajju had altogether evaporated, 'The tractor is yours and you can take it to the fields.'

'I suspect it is like the decoy wooden horse that was used by the soldiers in the story of the land across the seas!' said Phagu shaking his hand sceptically.

'I think, Baba!' said uncle Chajju, 'you are right in suspecting this engine. And I agree with you when you ask for it to be taken to pieces before our eyes. We will only be content if it is reassembled before our own eyes. Because then we can learn to master all the Jinns and Bhuts in it.'

'Uncle Chajju,' said the landlord, 'I can see your meaning. It is right that you should be able to contact the Jinns and Bhuts in it. I nominate you to be the foreman under whose supervision the engineer Sahib will take it to pieces. And then you shall learn to drive it, so that all the demons in it do the



rough work of the villages and give us more time to sleep under the shade of this banyan in the afternoons.'

'It is a great shock to my sensibility to learn to harness a steel plough,' said uncle Chajju, 'especially as I have never got over my love for my two bullocks who died in the drought, but I don't mind putting myself out a little if all of us can really have a longer siesta . . . In the hot weather there is no place like the shade of this banyan.'

Uncle Chajju is one of those funny men who has only to open his mouth to say a word to make people laugh. Perhaps it is his manner more than his method. Certainly, it is the tonal quality of his *theth* Punjabi accent that gets the villagers like a contagion. The amusement created by his speech reconciled all the recalcitrants to the tractor—though not until after it had really been pulled to pieces and each peasant had touched its several bolts and knobs and felt the motive power of its dynamo next to their ears. After the terror of Jinns and Bhuts had been appeased and curiosity satisfied, it remained for honour to have its due share. The Nawab photographed all the villagers with the tractor in their midst. And, of course, uncle Chajju, as the new driver stood like a colossus right in the foreground of the picture as a Sahib stands with his feet upon the back of a tiger which a Shikari has actually shot.

# A VILLAGE IDYLL

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MULK RAJ ANAND

SPLASHES of red and orange mingle into an aura of burning gold and, in a flash, the sun rises over the rim of the village pond, resplendent.

Gauri comes treading on the pearls of dew on the tufts of grass by the ditch to fetch water, with a pitcher under her arms.

'Oh, the fair one '

'Oh, ripe like the juice of a sugar cane.'

Govind sighs, as he sits rubbing his clothes with soap on a slab of stone. The glow produced by the brisk movement on his face ripens into crimson and his breath almost fails.

Gauri shyly draws the end of her dupatha over her head and dips her pitcher in the water, but, as she leans forward, the tips of her brave breasts are silhouetted against the sky line.

'May I be your sacrifice?' Govind whispers the familiar ejaculation of heart-squanderers in the streets of Verka. And, as though the words are potent like a magic spell, the blood rushes down from his head to his heart and loins, the centres of storm in his peasant soul. 'Oh the fair one' he hisses. And the hisses splutter into an embarrassed cough.

At that Gauri laughs even as her pitcher gurgles with a series of hysterical reverberations

And with that their love started. For, in the tickling of her throat and the saliva on his tongue was the meeting of long distances, of uneasy colloquies, of thumping hearts and reckless yearning.

She stood before him, her breasts heaving towards the morning, her senses sinuously touching the edge of demure restraint, her blood warming and melting and leaping like flames towards a ceiling in a conflagration.

He started at the wonder of her, his body taut, his breath swelling and unswelling to the tune of his now frightened

heart, his soul reaching out to some expression from the groin of endless silences. She seemed like some shimmering cloud image, veiled in sheaths of innocence. 'Hai! . . . the exclamation escaped from his throat involuntarily. And he leapt towards her like a tiger towards a young doe.

With a shrill shriek she ran, leaving her pitcher where it stood on the edge of the pond. And, as she raced up the steep bank, her torso straining forward but her legs far behind, she knew she was defeated and burst into a smile.

Govind caught her and flung her on to a dune. She fought him back, digging her nails into him and kicking him with upraised knees. He swung her from side to side and pinned her arms to the earth and lay down on her.

'Oh, let me go,' she said with tears in her eyes and laughter in her mouth. The colour on his face called to the radiance on her cheeks. And, giddy-eyed, she relaxed, till his lips touched hers. And now she swayed as though her soul was in a delirium of giving.

'Someone will see us,' she whispered.

But, storm tossed, scampering, wriggling hard, twitching with the concentration of nerves outstretched for months in desire for her, in a fierce felicity, he was intent on the dissolution of her energies, the melting of the snows of her virginity . . .

A little distance away, on the track leading to the rivulet, Lehna, the son of the landlord, went twisting the tails of his bullocks, goading them to drag the manure cart quicker. Govind flapped his arms like a protective male bird covering his mate under his wings, for Lehna was his rival. Gauri snuggled up to him like a cooing female bird. And thus they lay in the heat and the sweat, their voices rustling like the silks of Lahore and their faces glowing above the dune sands like two luminous wild flowers jutting out of the earth. The sun shone above their heads.

The sun shines, and the moon takes light from it, as also the stars. And on the earth, going round the sun, through the eternal movements, we possess in our spines all the planets, as well as a thirsty love and the desire to die in order to be reborn. . . . And from the dying, and through the rebirth, there grow lotuses among the reeds, the flaming smiling

pinks, pushed up in the quagmire by the vital spark that keeps things alive. In the fruits, flowers, foliages, among the birds, beasts and humans, the same glorious urge prospers. And there is creation.

Gauri smiles like the demure morning. Govind laughs like the temple drum. There is the voice of Siva in their curly throats And in their bodies is the sinuous disunion of a broken moment between the lord of storms and his consort, Parvati And in their touching is the burning of several planets, the extinction of worlds, the smothering of heavens, the dissolution of hells, and the springing of a serene pleasure, muted like a prayer in which we rest, sometimes as before a new miracle and sometime, as before the juxtaposition of legs intertwined in a ridiculous posture.

And thus begins a cycle.

Govind met Gauri in the lentil field on the first full moon night of autumn when every one was awake and merry; he lay with her in a hay barn on the eighth day of the new moon before winter, when people were feasting at night after fasting the whole day; and he took her on every moon-lit night in the winter. For, after the first flush of raw passion had expanded itself under the sun, they began more and more to lend themselves to the mellow light of the moon. Govind wore clean clothes and Gauri always had flowers in her hair.

As Gauri went to meet Govind in the fields by the river on one eclipse night, however, her mother saw her. 'Ah!' she shrieked at the boy, 'if you have spoiled my daughter, you must marry her . . . you wretch' . . . 'And she shrieked at Govind's mother for letting her son roam round like a bull. And Govind's mother shrieked at Govind's father for begetting a seducer. And Govind's father shouted at Govind. To which the boy returned the simple answer: 'Marry me to the girl.'

And then there was much toing and froing among the elders.

And, at last, on an auspicious day, discovered in the scrolls of their fate, for a good commission by Pandit Badri Nath the Brahmin priest, Govind and Gauri were married. . . .

## REVIEWS OF BOOKS

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THE VERTICAL MAN. A Study in Primitive Indian Sculpture. W. G. ARCHER. George Allen and Unwin 15s.

THIS book is the fruit of a protracted study of the subject. In 1931 Mr Archer happened to be hunting tigers in the province of Bihar in India. On entering the high-lying, barren country south of the Son River, inhabited by a Hindu tribe called the Ahirs, he noticed some images of a kind which appealed to him at once. They had no resemblance to the Indian sculpture with which we are generally familiar, that is to say, the temple sculpture.

Not until 1935, however, was he able to go again to the area, which is much out of the way. From that year he began to study the customs and folk-lore of the Ahirs, in order to arrive at a full understanding of their sculpture. He continued his investigations during the five months between October, 1938, and February, 1939, and the present book is the result.

Mr. Archer has already established himself with his *The Blue Grove*, which showed him to be not only a very careful anthropologist, but also a good writer of English prose and verse. *The Vertical Man* is likely to add considerably to his reputation in these fields. It is remarkable in the first place for its clarity, and for the imprint of a vigorous and cultivated mind; and is original in conception and strewn with a quantity of ideas, some perhaps a little contentious, but all of them stimulating.

The sculptures, of which Mr Archer shows us forty-eight full-page photographs, all represent one person, Bir Kuar, a cattle god. The Ahirs have inherited the conception of Bir Kuar from an unspecified antiquity. In the course of centuries they elaborated his myth with local variations, and supported it by a quantity of songs, an elaborate ritual, and these images. Living in the rather barren country that they do, they are dependent almost entirely upon their cattle, which are chiefly buffaloes. The fertility of their herd has, therefore, the same

vital importance to them as the fertility of his field has to the farmer. While careful tending of the herd sufficed in the ordinary way, the vagaries of nature were sometimes disturbingly mysterious. There were years when the she-buffaloes did not bring forth and others when tigers were especially dangerous. To enable them to cope with such dangers, that threatened their very existence, and which careful tending of the herds was not enough to stave off, the Ahirs evolved the conception of Bir Kuar. His duty was to promote the fertility of the herds and protect them from tigers.

As the myth of this god grew, a curious drama was added to the primary elements. Bir Kuar was a man who became a god. In his life he loved and was beloved by buffaloes. But did he put the welfare of the buffaloes above the welfare of the family? If he did, then he endangered this other essential to the tribe's existence. These conflicting aspects of his character were taken up in the songs and the ritual, and are reflected in the images, and about half the book is occupied with their discussion.

The main theme, however, is the sculptures regarded as art. Forty years ago they would have appeared no more than the efforts of a primitive people to portray the human figure. Their design would have seemed child-like and arbitrary, and the sole impression they gave one of barbarism. Events in Europe, however, have altered our point of view. Latterly an increasing number of sculptors have found it impossible to express their ideas through the natural articulation of the human form. Naturalism had become inadequate to clothe the thoughts that were rising in the West, and a search had to be made for new idioms.

The discovery of Negro art revealed that other artists had also felt the need for a manner, not based on the articulation of the joints, but on a geometrical arrangement where the form, as seen by the eyes, was given a different kind of dynamism by distorting it in a geometrical direction. This led to further investigations, and it became known, for instance, that in England, contemporary with the Gothic sculpture of the cathedrals, there was a rustic style which was not Gothic at all, but geometrical.

Just as this English peasant style intimately reflected native sensibility, while the cathedral sculpture was cosmopolitan, both in style and subject, so the sculpture of the Ahirs grew out of a region of particular beliefs and economic needs, distinct from the main culture of the continent, which rested upon a great philosophical synthesis

Mr. Archer devotes some space to a dissection of geometric art. He points out that there is the sort where the circles and rectangles of which it is composed correspond to mathematical concepts and have no relation to vital forms, though their shapes are sometimes symbolical of natural appearance, as is the horizontal of the horizon, the vertical of the thrust of growth, and their combination of the deep human feeling for balance, of which we are always subconsciously aware when we stand on our feet. Ben Nicholson's art is often of this kind. But the Ahirs' is rather a vital geometry in which the human figure is distorted in the direction of geometry, as in much of Picasso's art. An image created by this method can have an ultra-human presence. The great cultures have represented the divine as the sublimation of the human by creating ideal natural forms, thereby making the concept of beauty synonymous with divinity. But those resident beyond the pale of the great cultures in remote rustic places have generally (though not always, since we have the case of the paleolithic caves) preferred to associate the divine with a subliminal power, a dark mystery, whether it was disposed to help, like Bir Kuar, the guardian god, or was an evil force which had to be propitiated. The Ahirs, in the literature and ritual of their cult, anthropomorphise Bir Kuar and might, one supposes, have carried this into their sculpture and made a naturalistic guardian god with an appropriate expression and gestures, as no doubt they would have done had they been inside the major culture. In choosing to carve a geometrical expression of him, they fell back on a pre-cultural style for giving an impression of the supernatural. They were probably obliged to do this because their simple craftsmen had no models of the other kind to show them how it was done. Nevertheless, though the geometric style was easier for them, they had to know how to vitalize it. Genuine artistic intuition was required

in so manipulating the circles and rectangles, and integrating them with the idea of a human form, that the result gave the impression of supernormal powers. Since the Ahir images do give that impression, we must assume that the stone-masons who wrought the stone images, and the carpenters the wood, had artistic intuition. The statues are not lifeless reproductions of an established formula, resting on some original work of art, as are so many temple images, particularly late images of the Buddha, but are authentic variations on a theme, each of which is a creation, since its execution required the exercise of an autonomous act of intuition at the critical point where the design had to be made to yield a transcendence. But it is, of course, precisely in rustic communities, cut off from outer influences, that such unconscious knowledge of the difference between living and dead geometry is to be found. A South Sea Islander knows how to make a paddle which is a work of art by combining geometry with the shape of a palm leaf; the paddles that our craftsmen make are not vivified in this way. But some of our artists are engaged on this same creation of a transcendence from geometrized natural form. This is more difficult for them to accomplish than it is for the Ahirs, for they are inside a culture of another sort and, not able to recapture a primitive's subjective viewpoint, approach their task with a degree of objectivity which continually prompts them to use their intellect instead of their intuition. However, the mark of a great artist is the absence of intellect in that part of his work where the transmutation of the elements into a god is taking place; and a modern artist, if powerful enough, can use a geometric style and bring it to life. The phenomenon is, however, very curious, and perhaps sinister if, as is possible, the fact of the culture's style being no longer capable of stimulating the artist to creation indicates that the culture is dying.

The value of *The Vertical Man* is that it raises these sort of fundamental speculations. The Ahirs are exhibited to us as a tiny tribe of herdsmen who yet knew how to create a particular religion with its attendant literature and art. In them we seem to see a microcosm of how all religion and art were created.

MAURICE COLLIS



LAND AND MOTHERLAND. G T WRENCH Faber 7s 6d. WHAT are the reasons for the Englishman's general incapacity to understand the Indian's mental make-up? They are to be found, according to Dr Wrench's thesis, in the differences in their respective historical and social backgrounds. He sets these out in the form of eighteen so-called talks. The result is a highly interesting and thoughtful book. Dr Wrench is erudite and thought-provoking, and much of what he says on the Indians and the English is true, although the omissions of English rule in India come in only for an occasional mildly-worded reproach.

The main argument is that the Englishman with a background of small family has developed a strong civic sense. Whereas the Indian, brought up in large families and parcelled off into castes, has no civic sense at all, but only a family or, at best, a communal sense. Thus the Indian finds it hard to master the Western 'gadgets', to appreciate the English legal system and so on. The other decisive element in his outlook is the belief in the Hindu doctrine of *maya* or illusion. *Maya*, Dr. Wrench explains, is the conception that the phenomenal universe is illusory, the only reality being the *Atman* or the universal soul. Hence the fatalism and the attitude of disinterest in worldly affairs that one meets with in Indians.

Dr. Wrench is concerned not only to examine the foundations of the Indian social structure but also to suggest the sort of remedial plan which would be suitable for India. And most of his suggestions are serious and scholarly contributions to the question of India's future development. Several of the talks are devoted to an examination of the two other large peasant nations, China and Russia, the intention being to show that India's future does not lie in 'apeing' either of them.

So far so good. But when it comes to adducing examples to substantiate his evaluation of the Indian mind, Dr. Wrench's philosophical detachment breaks down and the old biased patronising attitude, which he has been at pains to condemn elsewhere, shows up. His examples are unfortunately no better than the usual puerile mem-sahib variety that irritate any intelligent student of India. There is the bearer who is

incapable of distinguishing the thick end from the thin edge of a wedge, the gardener who waters the garden while it rains, the railway employee who taps the wheels of trains without knowing why he does so. Surely, if Indians were so slow at grasping the most elementary Western 'gadgets' what were two million and more of them, the vast majority of them recruited from the peasantry, doing in the Imperial fighting forces in the last war? From all accounts they seemed to have operated the numerous complicated 'gadgets', which make up the arms of a modern army, quite creditably

Dr. Wrench has a few pet aversions. He dislikes socialism and political parties, presumably those of the left. 'It is the rich men,' runs a revealing sentence, 'the place-hunters, the *socialists* and *other parties* (my italics), whom the British conjure into being by their methods, but not the associative or civic sense' Once this is grasped it is not difficult to understand the rather indiscriminating affection he shows for the Native States. 'Within the Native States, the roots of tradition are still deep enough,' he believes, 'to hold the people amidst the gusts and passions of political change' It is disappointing that such a sagacious student of India should be unaware of the feudal despotism and backwardness that was to be found in all but a very few of the 563 Indian Native States.

One wonders whether Dr. Wrench has gone beyond the purely English sources to the serious Indian writers such as Tagore, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Radhakrishnan and Nehru. If he had he would have seen that what the concept of *maya* was meant to do and does is to provide the necessary corrective against a complete absorption in the things of the earth and the consequent neglect of the things of the spirit. Dr. Wrench never mentions the most vital and significant and pervasive of all Hindu concepts, that of *dharma*, which is, in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru, 'a conception of obligations, of the discharge of one's duties to oneself and to others.' Dharma enjoined Hindus to live intelligently.

S. MENON MARATH

# REVIEWS OF INDIAN BOOKS

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BHAGAVAD—GITA THE SONG OF GOD Translated by PRABHAVANANDA and ISHERWOOD. Introduction by ALDOUS HUXLEY. Phoenix House. 6s

As a child there was a copy of a badly translated verse rendering of the *Mahabharata* in my home. For a brief, nervously exhausting period the metamorphoses, the oppressive atmosphere and the cloudy battles of the quasi-epic filled my life and interfused with the daily realities of Scotland. Suddenly my interest ceased and only a puzzled memory of that half-separate section of the *Mahabharata* which is the *Gita* remained to me.

It was with a keen curiosity, therefore, that I picked up this pleasantly produced new version of the *Gita* and, ignoring the preparatory matter, re-read the Song of God itself. I was disappointed. Firstly by the translation I have no doubt that this is the best English version in existence, but its prose is stilted and its verse Wardour Street oriental.

To translate this complex philosophical dialogue into alternate passages of prose and verse is, I am sure, a sensible way of rendering the different levels of the thought. But the prose is not very good, and the pounding dimeters that dominate the verse are very bad. And the vocabulary is wretched—full of those *cliché* and falsely coloured terms which served the Victorian translators of the *Arabian Nights* and the *Chung Yung* equally.

Secondly, I was disappointed by the content. This is the most compact and authoritative short statement of a mysticism which seems fundamental to all mystics—to Plotinus or St. Bonaventure. But, alas, it only displays its case, it does not argue. The double legacy of Calvin and of Hume makes this failure to me almost overwhelming and leaves me almost ready to agree with Taine's judgment when he wrote of the solitary, who 'talks no more, adds fast to fast, lives naked between four fires, and under that terrible sun which unceasingly destroys and restores each living thing; who, for

weeks at a time, fixes his imagination first upon Brahma's feet, next on his knees, next on his thigh, then on his navel, and thus forward until under the pressure of this intense meditation, hallucinations appear, and the forms of all existence, mixed and changed within one another, quiver before his dazzled, vertiginous sight, until the unmoving man with inhaled breath and fixed gaze, sees the universe fade like smoke into the absolute emptiness of Being towards absorption with which he aspires.<sup>1</sup>

Is it, then, merely hallucination?

If the reader prefaces his study of the text by reading the appendix on the terms and metaphysics of the *Gita* and by Mr. Huxley's long, brilliant, and lucid introduction he will be less certain. These things go far to redeem this edition and answer the nineteenth century 'explanation away' of Taine. They also help to make this the least unworthy translation of an undeniably permanent and primary work of the human spirit.

DONALD G. MACRAE

<sup>1</sup> H Taine *Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise*, Intro. I

CONTEMPORARY INDIAN PAINTERS. G. VENKATACHALAM. Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Rs. 9.

DANCE IN INDIA. G. VENKATACHALAM. Nalanda Publications, Bombay. Rs. 8/4.

MR VENKATACHALAM is one of the most enthusiastic, intelligent and disinterested promoters of the arts in India. He is not, strictly speaking, a critic or an art-historian. He is a friend of artists and dancers, a traveller, a lecturer, a journalist and a very good fellow; and these two books are journalism and to be read as such. They are written primarily for the English-speaking Indian public. They are collected and re-edited from previous writings and are, therefore, in some details, out of date. And they are primarily books about people.

That having been said, both books are to be commended. They serve their purpose admirably in India, and to the Western reader they offer an opportunity of getting behind

and beneath the numerous difficulties of approaching contemporary Indian art. Art, after all, is made by men and women. And here are quite a number of them.

The collection of sketches of living Indian painters was put together before we had to think in terms of two nations, India and Pakistan, and the cultural unity of the sub-continent is therefore not called in question. M. A. Rahaman Chughtai, now the principal artist of Pakistan, appears herein as an Indian rather than a Muslim. If his aesthetic origins seem more Persian than anything else, we have only to remember the Persian sojourn of the Moghuls, the art of whose courts nevertheless became and remained Indian. There was a Muslim also with four Hindus from Bengal and one from Mysore, among the first batch of pupils who studied under Abanindranath Tagore at Calcutta as disciples of the 'Indian Renaissance' in painting: that movement that started so bravely and in the end seemed to lose itself in the sands of sentimentality and self-conscious nationalism, a most treacherous compound.

What emerges? Not much, the average reader of these pages may at first conclude, except Jamini Roy, who gives us a vigorous palette of pure colours and has excited the attention of sophisticated admirers of Bengali folk-art. And yet, in his concluding essay, the author is perfectly justified in castigating the superficial judgments of a Beverley Nichols on contemporary Indian painting. If this chapter is read first, the preceding essays on different artists are at once clarified, and without struggling further to find a standard of comparison for their achievements we can perhaps begin to understand the men through whose hands Indian painting has passed in an extraordinarily difficult period which may yet prove to be the painful scratching of the soil for a national culture which is still to flower.

Mr. Venkatachalam has confined himself to the artists whom personally he knows best, which means that he has omitted the one whose work not only forms the best bridge for western appreciation but marks also, as a few believe, the highest mark yet touched by modern Indian painting. The late Amrita Sher-Gil, who died tragically young, had all the

answers to all the disparagements of her country's contemporary efforts. She knew the worst in Indian art and just why it was bad. She created the best and pointed the way to a possible synthesis of the eastern and western traditions India will still need her Jamini Roys, her interpreters of hereditary craftsmanship. She will still need artists also to express her unique metaphysic. The 'problem' of creating a satisfactory art on the shocking ruins of our own Victorian pedagogy in India is a problem of the relation of the artist to his public. For as Mr Venkatachalam's sketches reveal, even those who have most devotedly determined to 'be Indian' are in fact consumed by the idea of 'being an artist' in the western concept. Indian traditions of painting are those of the mural and the miniature. What is an easel-painting *for*? That is the first and still the central question, and not only for Indians to whom the thing is an importation but for us also who have forgotten why we thought of it.

Among many interesting illustrations in Mr Venkatachalam's fascinating volume *Dance in India* is a photograph of Uday Shankar and Simkie in a pose which translates South Indian bronzes into flesh and blood. Indian dancing has been more fortunate than Indian painting, for it has no history. It is a continuum. It comes to us now, interpreted by Uday Shankar or Ram Gopal, as a discovery. It sets its own miraculous standards, indifferent to ours, and the author shows us how inadequate is the glimpse we have been allowed, of one of the world's most perfect art-forms. Again his book deals with personalities, but he has a second part which sets forth the different kinds of Indian dancing in a most satisfactory way.

(Both these volumes are handled in England by David Marlowe Limited )

FRANCIS WATSON

GITA GOVINDA. SHRI JAYADEVA, Rendered from the Sanskrit and Illustrated by GEORGE KEYT. Kutub (Bombay), distributed by Collett's Bookshop, Charing Cross Road, W.C. 2. 9s. 6d.

THE *Gita Govinda* deals with the loves of Krishna and Radha. It was written by Shri Jayadeva, in the early twelfth century.

Court-poet of the last Hindu King of Bengal, he was a devout follower of the Vaishnana cult. The stories go that once he meant to become an ascetic, but was turned aside by divine intervention, that Krishna himself wrote much of the poem for him; that the Ganges changed its course to come nearer his house when he was old, so that he might bathe more easily. He is still highly venerated in Bengal, and a regular pilgrimage is made to his birthplace.

The Vaishnana sects adore Vishnu in his incarnations Krishna and Ramachandra, and associate them with their wives as their *saktis* or female energies. Often, the favourite object of worship is the young Krishna, Govinda or Bala Gopala (the cowherd lad), foster-son of the cowherd Nanda, who spends his time in loveplay with the *gopis* or wives of the Vrindavana cowherds, particularly with Radha. Many Sanskrit texts treat the episode (e.g. the tenth canto of the *Bhagavata-purana*, which in vernacular versions has become the Hindi *Prem-sagar*, or Ocean of Love, a romance popular all over India). Radha appears in the *Brahma-vivarta*, and Jayadeva's lovely poem sets out her love-making and the pangs of love-separation.

It is, in fact, a dramatic poem, close to fertility-ritual (with many analogies to *The Song of Songs*, where also we meet ritual-drama breaking up into lyrical elaboration and moving towards romance).

Keyt's version attempts to carry over the lyrical speed and sweetness, but gives up the rhymes. It is readable throughout, and at moments it kindles into the needed dance-grace and magical intoxication. But there are many difficulties facing the translation of erotic works born in an age when the physical details of love still had a ritual virtue and no notions of prurience could intervene. It is so easy to fall into stereotype—and the erotic stereotype at once begets a sense of shame in the reader—or to strike a note of the ridiculous. These dangers can be countered only by lyrical precision of phrase, a skilful deflection of formula by a slight twist which regains freshness. Powys Mathers knew this, and that is why his versions of oriental erotic works keep literary dignity and never seem shamefaced or hectic.

Keyt's version is not on this high level, but it provides a good glimpse into a magnificent work, which can help us to grasp the basic sex-imagery underlying so much Indian religion and art. His book, indeed, must not be judged solely from the literary angle. He is an artist, and the one colour plate and the twelve drawings here reproduced are beautifully in key with the poem. They show how the Indian artist to-day can validly set about using his national tradition to produce work which is both immemorial and sharply contemporary in outlook.

Keyt's remarks on the poem, indeed, are worth citing, to bring out the way in which a community of emotion, artistic and human, links medieval and modern India.

The physical aspect here is not something distinct from the spiritual, nor is it on that account a parallel in any sense whatever to the sort of love that is sexual in the manner of the *Ars Amatoria* and other such expressions of 'profane' love in Europe. But on the contrary, there is the endowment of the physical side with all the real and enduring qualities of the spiritual—a kind of synthesis not to be confused with the pathetic attempts at a synthesis to be found in modern guide-books, religious and otherwise, to a happy state of matrimony. So that there is, in consequence, nothing trivial: the most fugitive emotion in love is important, and any little gesture of physical sensation, and the relationship and association of the surroundings—trees, flowers, birds—and the suitable hours and seasons, and the bodily adornments and the use of unguents and perfumes—and all this becomes typified. The conventions are an expression of emphasis; and the high artificiality or *Alamkara*—so misjudged sometimes by Oriental scholars in Europe—is nothing but the only possible form of expression for such a realization of the sentiment of love as it is known in Hindu India, basically so true to this day, wherever there has been no shallow westernization or complete divorce from tradition.

Keyt is a Ceylonese who has spent almost his whole life in Ceylon. Starting from naturalistic studies, he soon generalized his forms, and then moved into experimental researches, restlessly merging Indian elements with elements from French painting (Picasso, Matisse). In the later 'thirties he matured this process, and recently, working in the Kandayan countryside and painting big murals for the shrine-room of the Gotami



Vihara, he has got his feet firm on Indian earth. In this book, his style is seen at its serenest, working with simple and ample flowing curves.

I must admit that my typographical fingers itched for the chance to have made the book's format more adequate to the fine ingredients, but, ignoring that minor lament, I must end by repeating that here is a book of high importance for anyone interested in the art and religion of the ancient and the new Indias.

JACK LINDSAY

POEMS FROM IQBAL. Translated from the Urdu by V. G. KIERNAN. Kutub (Bombay), distributed by Collett's Bookshop, Charing Cross Road, W C 2 15s.

IQBAL and Tagore are the great poets of twentieth-century India; and I think that a strong case can be made out for the superiority of Iqbal. (Tagore's prose work restores the balance, but I am speaking here of verse.)

Iqbal is a Muslim, writing in Urdu. But, though Urdu remains primarily an expression of Muslim culture, we must not think of it as narrowly Muslim. The vernacular press shows how widely it is used by Hindus, and the elements that have gone to make it up are highly complex. Literary Urdu does not differ vitally from Hindi in grammar and vocabulary; the basic point of contrast lies in the metrical outlooks. Urdu metres are based on Persian verse, which follows a special order of long and short syllables; Hindi metres are mostly scanned by the number of syllabic instants, and so on.

In Urdu, there is a strong meeting-place of Muslim (Persian-Arabic) influences and forces of popular Hindu tradition; and that is one of the reasons why it is the one language of India with a great and continuous verse-tradition, at least from the days of Akbar, when the vernacular had been long influenced by Muslim forms and Sanskrit works were being done into Persian. It may, in fact, be described as the literary language of the Punjab, the Muslim, and the Hindu alike.

In the nineteenth century the impact of English influences had a rejuvenating effect on Urdu and helped it to throw off the burden of Persian stereotypes. A series of fine poets

appeared, Hali, Azad, Rizvi Akbar, Surur, with many lesser figures. Iqbal, a Punjabi, born in 1875, thus arrived in the midst of a thriving tradition in the throes of transition. Urdu verse was already trying to get at grips with a changing world. In him, the struggle between the old tradition and the new forces came to a head, and he is important as a thinker as well as a poet.

His first work, *Ode to the Himalayas*, appeared in 1901. He began by picking up some of the best elements of the Urdu lyrical tradition, the erotic *ghazal*; expressing immediate responses to love and nature. Out of the simple love-attitude emerged the filial love of motherland, with a general conviction of the need for reforms (in the Western sense) in all spheres of Indian life. A large, generous emotion towards 'India', towards some religious attitude in which distinctions of creed and caste would dissolve.

But, having taken his degree at Lahore, he spent the years 1905-8 in England and Germany, and was disillusioned about Western or European values and democracy. At the same time, the sentimental abstraction, India, fell away; he returned home to polemise against all partial *-isms*, he wanted, partly under the influence of Nietzsche, a total reversal of the ideals of post-Renaissance, post-Reformation Europe.

First, he saw this as a change in institutions and values. He exalted the East. Let the East turn from the false and vicious glare of Western Democracy (with its instrumental 'discursive intellect unilluminated by intuition') and rediscover its own better values. He turned to the tribal love of Islam. All the while his sympathy for the suffering people was deepening. The fight widened—now against *all* Satanic values and forces (those of Iblis). Western Europe was based in Pharaonism and Mammonism, but these evils ruled also in the East, so that the fight could not be simply East against West. Now, what he wanted was a new total human integration, denied both by East and West (though the politically-greater power of the West gave it the graver responsibility for the Satanic rule).

He accepted the class-war, but insisted that the struggle of values, though at every point implicated with the class war and the struggle to defeat the Satanic lusts of power and greed,

went also beyond the class-war in the sense that it raised issues of eternal significance for men—issues that, in changed form, would persist under socialism. The goal always was *Khudi*, integrated selfhood.

From 1915 the humanist emphasis intensified. He still believed in Islam, but in Islam rediscovering its prophetic virtue along the lines he had outlined, Islam rediscovering tribal democracy in terms of the new situation. In *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, he tried to work out the lines of integrative convergence between European and Islamic attitudes. His poems look back to the great age 'The lion-hearts are gone from Truth's deep forest, none left but men priest-rid.' But he believes that the forces of regeneration are still alive and can be canalized towards the rule of *Khudi*.

Thus, he finally accepts Soviet Russia, but believes that because it has risen against Satanism its completion must come through conversion to Islam. *The Voice of Karl Marx* utters the Prophet's condemnation of a dissociated society:

In every church and seat of education  
The murderous crimes of greed are masked under  
Your comedy of ingenious cerebration.

Again, 'To godless Russia the command comes now.' And in *Socialism*, addressing Russia, he ends.

In our age that old lesson which in God's word lay concealed,  
*Cast thy superfluity away*, perhaps shall be revealed

Finally, in a magnificent poem, *Lenin in the Presence of God*, he puts into Lenin's mouth the attack on mechanized Europe, 'a land unblessed by visionary light.'

He consistently denounces Western Democracy as a fake, a Satanic lie, a screen of exploitation and war. In *Capital and Labour* he expounds this theme, but insists that Satanism must be fought in the East too. Still, it is the West that reveals evil in its sharpest and fullest form. In Spain he writes.

Were I to draw the veil, bare the face of my thoughts,  
Europe could not endure it, the burning heat of my songs.

And in *Jehad*

No, preach to him whose bloody fist imperils  
 The world, relinquishment of holy war  
 Europe, from crown to toe swathed in chain-armour,  
 Stands ready to defend the glittering reign  
 Of falsehood.

Selfhood, he says, requires the harmonious fusion of both *faqr* and *'ishq*—active renunciation (which includes the whole adventurous expansion of spiritual energies, out past all obstructions such as greed) and love (which includes the principle of individuality, assimilative activity, intuitive apprehension of truth). The man who has thus gained selfhood owns the *look* of power and love, he has won a stable and potent kinship with his fellows and with nature.

But *khudi* is not a mystic entity. It always involves relationship and struggle; and Iqbal sets out his dialectic of good and evil in *Gabriel and Satan*. Union and separation are facets of the same relationship 'A secret union lurks within dispersal.' 'In every atom's heart a Day of Judgment's blast, oh Saqi' He explores the hidden polarities, and finds the same formative processes at work in Star, Glowworm, Class-conflict, Love

His own personal position he works out to a large extent in his symbolism of the Hawk 'There are skies past the skies that your wings have possessed' Here, he finds an image capable of expressing a dedicated loneliness, a magistral relation to nature, a delight in the pure rhythms of life, but the hawk-power in the last resort must serve humanity. The penetrative vision must come down to earth and enrich love.

The full quest is always for Eden. Always the fight against Satanism is simultaneously a fight against social injustice and a fight for *khudi*, and the fullness of aim finds its signature in the warm pantheist or symbolist awareness of hidden links and unions

For how long must Man his banishment from Paradise bewep?  
 How much longer, of the garden's old attendant asks the Spring,  
 For the red wounds of the rose your idle ointments will you bring?  
 Foolish moth, that age-long fluttering round the candle's flame  
 forswear.

In your own true being's brightness your own dwelling-place prepare.

Thus ends *Capital and Labour*. It is in such culminations that we meet the unmistakable stigmata of greatness in Iqbal's work and are convinced of the reality in his concept of *khudi*.

The translation by Victor Kiernan is of considerable merit. Urdu metres are extremely difficult to reproduce, with their collocations of long syllables modified by the strong accentuations that a poetry still linked with public declamation possesses. But Mr. Kiernan succeeds in giving an idea of the vigour and richness of the originals.

Translators of verse fall into four main categories. The inspired, who carry over the poem as nearly as possible into the differing language; the unscrupulous, who use the foreign work as a basis for a new flight, the deadly, who flatten everything out; and the generally capable who, without achieving high poetry, yet manage to convey (at least, if given enough space) something genuine of the original's virtue. Mr. Kiernan is of the fourth kind, his versions are not great poetry, but they are good enough to convince us of the greatness of the work with which they wrestle. The essays on Iqbal by M. D. Taseer and Khwaja Abdul Hamid are intellectually satisfying and give the necessary information to an English reader. Altogether, this is a very valuable book.

JACK LINDSAY

THE PEACOCK LUTE ANTHOLOGY OF POEMS IN  
ENGLISH BY INDIAN WRITERS. Edited by V. N.  
BHUSHAN. Padma Publications (Bombay). Rs. 6.

ONE wonders what it is that makes these poems read like exercises in versification? Naive, archaic, lacking in tautness or the illumination of personal sensibility, pallid and devoid of verbal distinction, most of them rarely rise above the flat level of verse. Is it because the living tissue of the chosen language, English, eludes the writers? For nearly all the poets in this collection know their English only at second-hand, from books or from English-speaking Indians. They have no acquaintance with the living native speech.

In spite of the editor's enthusiastic and persuasive introduction one cannot help feeling that the choice of English has

hampered rather than helped the free flowering of the poetic imagination of the writers, and that they would have achieved a more memorable crystallization of their poetic awareness in their own respective mother-tongues. It is one of the tragic results of alien rule that a large section of the intelligentsia of India should be forced to live as exiles in the midst of their own cultural *milieu* with often only English for a medium of expression and communication.

The most outstanding and significant poet in the collection is Miss Bharati Sarabhai. (It is a pity that more of her poems were not included) She has an unsentimental human sympathy. Her audacious phrasing and image, violent and rugged at times, have an irresistible power

At last rising the moon wakes on her wind-flooded head,  
shakes the showering *shursha* free,  
looks round crouching on branch-held  
feet, and now from the tree-  
Side, a-liquid, she shakes her head limpid dazzling free.

Among the others, one remembers the sustained meditative rhythm of Armando Menzes, the neat irony of 'The Donkey' by P. R. Kaikini, the gentle grace of Toru Dutt and the vivaciousness of Mrs Sarojini Naidu.

S. MENON MARATH

THE NOVELIST AS THINKER Focus Four. Edited by  
B RAJAN. Dennis Dobson 7s. 6d.

THIS is a very brave book. A well-compiled anthology with the stress on an examination of the *weltanschauung* of novelists like Aldous Huxley, Sartre, Mauriac, Isherwood, L. H. Myers, and Evelyn Waugh, it appears at a time when the anthology is in bad odour with the reading public. Its purpose is heightened by the fact that good criticism in these days of lean newspapers and periodicals has become almost synonymous with a fair amount of space at the disposal of the critic. The inflated reputations of a handful of staff literary critics who are fortunate enough to have a column or so to play with in some of the Sunday newspapers and weeklies, become apparent

when one reads, for example, D. S. Savage's brilliant analysis of the horrible anatomy of frustration which Aldous Huxley has finally arrived at in his novels. By also attempting to debunk what he considers to be Evelyn Waugh's 'juvenile bias' and 'adolescent romanticism', D. S. Savage postulates a mature, idealistic impetus which he apparently fails to find in the work of these two writers. This mood of debunking is even carried a stage further by G. H. Bantock when he lays bare some of the superficialities in the novels of Isherwood. This critic seems to have reason and judgment on his side when, in comparison, he stresses the 'moral fastidiousness' in the novels of L. H. Myers. In reading this symposium of the novelist as thinker, the ghastly feeling that the dead-end and lack of faith at statesmen's conference chambers are also reflected among the most sentient contemporary novelists, is unfortunately unavoidable. Thomas Good, however, indicates that Sartre in his revelation of the collapse of values, has still left the door open without defining what is to follow. But his assumption that 'there is the Sartre who carries some vision of the future which, not yet articulate, is the source of an intensive energy which we cannot doubt is concentrated on the recuperation of France,' seems a poor summing-up. Wallace Fowlie's essay on Mauriac takes us to less nihilistic territory, and the picture that this critic presents of Mauriac and Pascal appearing as two lawyers pleading man's case before God, does not seem unreal. The poetry in this anthology tends to be sturdy and rather cerebral. In addition to the exhibitionism and occasional poignancy of E. E. Cummings, there is some accomplished work by Clifford Collins and C. Busby Smith and a psychologically moving piece, 'The Poet,' by B. Rajan who says, 'A man kills anger on the edge of darkness. Where all perfections find themselves surmised.' A vigorously written short story by Arthur Mizener, seems to give an incongruous touch to the unity of this anthology. The inclusion of some North American critics such as Harry Levin ('Literature as an Institution') and Andrews Wanning ('The Literary Situation in America') serves to enhance its value as a worthwhile book of criticism.

HUGO MANNING

T S ELIOT A STUDY OF HIS WRITING BY SEVERAL HANDS.

Edited by B. Rajan. Dennis Dobson. 7s. 6d.

TOWARDS the greater honouring of T. S. Eliot few new distinctions can now be extended. What with the Order of Merit, a profile in the *Observer* usually reserved for such distinguished contemporary figures as U Tin Tut, and the publication of a symposium under the editorship of Thurairajah Tambimuttu and Richard March, I should have thought that society had laid all its prizes at the feet of the unacknowledged laureate of this time. But discreetly, even shyly, lost among the bouquets of roses and the medallions, a little brown book (also edited by an Indian, Mr B Rajan) had, some time ago, made its public appearance, curtsied, and presented the poet Eliot with a congratulatory address from an octet of distinguished scholars. It is a very good book too, in spite of its finickey picking among the poems, its sesquipedalian pomposity, and its surgical dissection of a body of poetry that goes on walking about whilst these scholars go on talking in the mortuary. It is salutary, nevertheless, to witness the conviction with which these investigators seek to worry the lights and the life out of poems written by a poet who wrote. 'The poet throws meaning to the reader the way a burglar throws meat to a dog.' When the truth of this remark is contested, this excellent book, and others such, should be produced on the scene of the crime. For these dogs growl and grumble and grizzle and goggle over the meat of the meaning without any apparent knowledge of the fact that the Muse has been ravished in the house, her fabulous jewels stolen, and the criminal decamped to America or Fame or his sixtieth birthday. The epitome of all this occurs with simple delicacy in the sentence of Mr Cleanth Brooks, Associate Professor of English at the Louisiana State University, who concludes his exegesis with the words: 'The foregoing account of *The Waste Land* is not, of course, to be substituted for the poem itself.'

Conversely, the paper on *Gerontion* contributed by Wolf Mankowitz could be substituted for the poem, but not with profit. It gives me the impression of having been written to persuade Mr Mankowitz that he was in fact himself composing *Gerontion*. In this it resembles the 'creative' criticism of



the notorious Mr. Symons, who wrote criticism the way poetasters write poetastry, and who wrote poetry the way paper-hangers hang paper. Mr. Mankowitz is not really telling anyone anything when he introduces his running commentary with the sentences 'The easy, supple movement of the fighting at the hot gates is slowed by the warm rain, and then the action becomes much slower impeded by unproductive mud and salt, and preyed upon by the corrupting flies. The decayed house is the last figure in the progression away from uninhibited action. Its inhabitants are equally decayed—Gerontion is infirm, the gutter is "peevish", the woman sneezes, and the goat, archetype of potency, is sick and coughing' Mr. Mankowitz concludes with the remark that 'such writing (as Eliot's) will always demand the enthusiasm of concentrated reading, rather than that of adjectival recommendation.' But I recommend to Mr. Mankowitz's attention a sentence from the paper of M. C. Bradbrook on Eliot's critical method 'Recently when reading aloud *Le Bateau Ivre*, I was pressed to say what it meant and replied with deliberate unhelpfulness that it meant what it said and, could other words suffice, it would not have been a successful poem, at all'

Perhaps it is a simple coincidence that the only paper in this collection that seems to get near the nub of Eliot's poetry is the only paper written by an acknowledged poet. This is Anne Ridler's *A Question of Speech*. Her piece makes a charming gesture of indebtedness for herself and those other poets who have anything to thank him for and since this means all those worth reading, it speaks with qualities if not quantities.

On Eliot as critic, the Fellow and Lecturer in English at Girton College, Cambridge, M. C. Bradbrook, explains that his critical reputation (Eliot's, not Bradbrook's) has experienced a decline among the Professors and at the University of Cambridge. But it is, Miss Bradbrook implies, more the saturnalian ageing of a deity than the desuetude of a don. And, after all, this is not very surprising. At sixty it's hard to bite your way through a brick wall.

GEORGE BARKER

AMONG THE GREAT. SRI DILIP KUMAR ROY. (Valarda Publications, Bombay. Distributed by David Marlowe Ltd., 109 Great Russell Street, W.C. 1.)

THE NEW INDIA. SIR ATUL CHATTERJEE. Allen and Unwin. 8s 6d

FIFTEEN shillings are not too many to buy the vision and the freshness packed in the 291 demy octavo pages of Sri Dilip Kumar Roy's *Among the Great*. The author is himself in the running for greatness, by which let us understand a spiritual aplomb akin to a poet's afflatus . . . With the same truth as he reveals the sunny side of the soul of the martyred Mahatma, does he delineate the knight-like reverence of Tagore for womanhood, the dedication of Romain Rolland to the ideal of art and the artist alongside with Rolland's universality and dream of the reunification of the great Indo-European family, and his enthusiasm for Indian music. They (all) came to a city but Bertrand Russell returned to his own. However, the author has afforded us an affectionate glimpse of Russell's city. With Sri Aurobindo we approach the monumental or, to use that 'greatest living Yogi's' own coinage, 'supramental'. Never have I had the transcendentalism of Yoga 'explained' to me in the language of human understanding as in the conversations recorded in the chapter (and verse) of the seer, Sri Aurobindo.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan contributes a noble introduction.

The author enjoyed, as he deserved, the privilege of being the guest and equal of his eminent hosts, and he has done his portraits from the life with a light pencil. The conversations were recorded at the heart of the living moment. Many of the letters are published in full for the first time. If for no other reason than this the book is important.

Comparison of *The New India* by Sir Atul Chatterjee would be unfair. Obviously the 200 crown octavo pages here cannot review all that bears on the fact and concept of the New India. As a study of the social, religious, cultural, economic, and administrative background the book is irreproachable. It is well written. New India comes into it, but not the newest. Kashmir is dismissed in two short sentences. The statemanship by which the accession of all but the two recalcitrant major

States to the Indian Union has been achieved is not even mentioned. Sir Atul's *New India* stops short at a year ago, but though a rehash of all the known facts, it is distinguished by its utter freedom from and entire innocence of the passions inseparable from Indian politics.

FREDOON KABRAJI

# INDIA A SYNTHESIS OF CULTURES KEWAL MOTWANI.

Thacker (Bombay).-Rs. 7 14.

MR. MOTWANI maps out an ambitious programme in his introduction: 'His aim has been to redefine the uniqueness of the Indian culture and its spiritual values, to focus attention on the social disorganization so widely prevalent at present, and to indicate the technique of meeting the challenge of to-day.'

But the actual achievement is disappointing. The best and the most useful thing in the book is the survey of the history of ancient India and its philosophy and culture. The rest of the book is mediocre and a little tiresome. Mr. Motwani is so enamoured of the glories of India's hoary past that it is only with great reluctance that he concedes any good in anything Occidental. India to him is an 'Idea, which once lived and functioned in the lives of her men . . . and which must incarnate for her own redemption and that of the human race.' This belief in the uniqueness of India is affirmed again and again: 'the Vedic seers, who laid the foundations of Indian culture, sought and found the eternal verities to which they gave a verbal garb in the Vedas.'

India's genius he sees as the pursuit of harmony and synthesis, that of the Western civilization discord and conflict.

It is when Mr. Motwani tries to establish the superiority of India's way of life by contrasting it with the West that he fails to convince. His narrow nationalism provokes impatience. His picture of the West is built out of superficialities and is blackened by a catalogue of its diseases such as unemployment, poverty in the midst of plenty, wars, etc.

Although Mr. Motwani possesses a fund of apposite knowledge of all sorts he has little discernment or perception. He

is in essence a demagogue. One seeks in vain in his book for a glimmer of the type of fine humility and patient philosophic quest that makes Jawaharlal Nehru's *Discovery of India* such an infinitely satisfying document.

S. MENON MARATH

ALL ABOUT MR. HATTERR. G. V. DESANI. Aldor. 9s. 6d. WITHIN a fortnight of publication this book went into a second edition. No Indian writer before Desani (indeed very few Occidental ones) has received such commendation from so many eminent people in such a short space of time. T. S. Eliot, C. E. M. Joad, Edmund Blunden, Arthur Calder-Marshall and others have praised his work without stint. *All About Mr. Hatterr* has been compared to Joyce, Rabelais, Sterne, Henry Miller, Damon Runyon, and Saroyan. It has perhaps a dash of them all, but it is unique enough to stand on its own feet. Mr. Desani throws words around so wildly and with such gamin-like grace that immediately one asks the question: How can a non-European manage it? For it's unlike anything I've ever read; Desani handles our language with such gusto and with such disregard for the conventions of grammar. From a purely technical point of view one is amazed at the skill with which he skates swiftly from Shakespearean quotation to the argot of the docks and slums, from highfalutin philosophical sermonizing to the cockney's idea of the French language. No English writer, I'm certain, could have done it. It is furiously funny and scandalously serious at one and the same time. It mocks at all established order, yet there is so much gaiety in its irreverence that no offence can be taken or is meant.

Harold Brighouse has called Desani 'a playboy of the English language, a juggler with words'. How true! The book is a *jeu d'esprit*, and when one at last comes to the end one sits back and wonders whether it isn't all a huge joke: a joke carried out at the expense of we poor Occidentals by a mercurial young man from the East, with a quicksilver tongue and a flying wit, a visitor amongst us, a visitor who sees all our faults and possibly a few of our virtues.

But on closer analysis, the book is more than a hoax. It is

a serious, indeed a deadly serious, work that will be remembered long after others published at the same time have fallen into the limbo of the lost. In fact, I'd wager that twenty or thirty years hence it will be read with far greater seriousness than it is being read now. The next generation will understand it even better than ours—atom bombs and other trivia permitting, of course. Perhaps, indeed, because of them.

You may ask: What's it all about?

Well, this is difficult to say. It purports to be the autobiography of Mr. H. Hatterr, the son of a European merchant seaman and a Penang lady. He has an original untutored mind and a thirst for knowledge, and to develop these he pinches an English Dictionary, a 'Latin Self-Taught', and a 'French Self-Taught'. Anyone might say that Mr. Hatterr's autobiography has no classical unity, despite his thirst for classical knowledge. But it has. At the beginning of every chapter, Hatterr holds conversation with a Sage. There are seven chapters and seven sages, each of whom holds forth on a different aspect of life. This is what Hatterr would call his Higher Education, and as his untutored mind worries him he puts chapter headings to guide other untutored minds in the same paths as himself (though it's hardly likely that many of these would like to have the same kind of adventures, say, for instance, with Charlie the lion or with Always-Happy, the professional mendicant and self-styled saint.) Each chapter begins with a presumption, goes on with an adventure, has an 'aside', and then finishes with a conversation with Hatterr's friend, Banerrji, in which everything is summed up, and Hatterr (richer in knowledge, we hope) gets ready to go forward into another chapter to hold converse with another Sage.

There's so much in the book, so much sense and nonsense mixed, that it's difficult to give an idea of its flavour. But perhaps one quotation will give an inkling of what to expect:

'Hell, can you imagine the depth of red on Lucifer's face when he finds Himself in Heaven? Yet, that's where the Feller is heading for! Free board and lodge! That's Law. That's Contrast. That's Compulsion. No escape!'

For Mr. H. Hatterr comes to the final conclusion that Satan is going to Heaven, whether he likes it or not, and will become a Good Angel, and so Heaven will become his Hell because he doesn't like being a Good Angel.

So what?

Hatterr may have an untutored mind and what most people would consider no virtues, but actually he has the major virtues of tolerance and acceptance. And what more can we ask?

The more I think of it the more amazed I get that the book managed to get published at all, despite its undoubted genius; for publishers are notoriously conservative, and *All About Mr. Hatterr* is not a conservative book.

FRED URQUHART

THE LAND AND THE WELL. HILDA WERNHER and HUTHI  
SING. Harrap. 9s. 6d.

RICE. K. AHMAD ABBAS. Kutub (Bombay). Rs. 3.8.

THERE is still Western gold in pictures of India; Western readers can be grateful to those who present the sights in acceptable form. Mrs. Wernher, for instance, unfolds a strikingly coloured pageant of a village wedding in India—everything from the matching of horoscopes to the ritual smiting of the bamboo, covered with pink tissue paper, on which are perched wooden birds. But she makes the mistake of drawing our attention to the secret of the sleight; she reverses the process and lets us watch her Indian peasants listening enraptured to an account of the Western telephone. Then, of course, we begin to suspect that it is our unfamiliarity with the subject, rather than the author's insight, which is holding our attention; and once we have lost the charm of the picture, we have lost the book. We query the legitimacy of chapters which are made up of descriptions of plays visited and legends retold; we notice the weakness of the plot, no thicker than the paper on which it is written, which permits reality to slide into fairy-tales like the last minute rescue. However, it is fair to say that one does not expect to find the dynamic of the individual in the static feudal society of types, and *The*

*Land and the Well* has the advantage of being in part a record of a vanishing civilization in India

On the other hand, the publisher of Mr. Abbas's short stories insists that the author is dealing with the new era in India—the struggle of the type to become the individual. one expects, therefore, literary material rather than the picture. But one churlish reviewer cannot help feeling the picture has simply been changed for the pictures. Here is no evolution of type into individual, but the struggle of serf type to become film type. *Rice* contains the cruel old man who loves tiny birds, the patient housewife who gives birth while waiting in a queue, the girl who chooses a noble career rather than comfort, etc ; and each exists in the context in order to exploit Hollywood subsentiment. This is frightening? Is new India to become a living film synopsis? A twentieth-century danger, then, gives Mr Abbas's book an urgent claim to the attention of the social historian if not to the student of literature

OSWELL BLAKESTON

CARAMEL DOLL. ABINDRANATH TAGORE (Kutub, Bombay. 7s. 6d. INDIAN FAIRY TALES. MULK RAJ ANAND. (Kutub. 10s 6d.)

CHILDREN's books have been coming to us fairly steadily from the Continent and elsewhere overseas. Books printed and published in India are more rare. These two 'juveniles' are therefore specially welcome. Their production and good, bright coloured lithograph illustrations set a high standard and add to their value as art and entertainment.

It is interesting to note in *The Caramel Doll* the recurrence of the 'seven' theme so familiar in Europe. This is a simple story on familiar lines, about jealousy overthrown and virtue rewarded; but the setting being India, the protagonists are the favourite wife and the despised wife of the king, not the ugly sisters, or the seventh son, of this hemisphere. The Wise Monkey who presides over the fate of the despised wife would make a pretty pair with Dick Whittington's cat. *Indian Fairy Tales*, reminiscent of Aesop and other old friends, have inevitably many illusions lost on minds brought up in another folk-lore and faith. But it is clear that there is, on the whole,

little difference in concept and manner (if these two books are typical) between Eastern and Western fairy tales. It is in detail of matter and background that they vary. Dr. Mulk Raj Anand's stories are most gracefully told. Mr. Tagore well maintains family tradition

Each of these two authors brings the Land of Once-Upon-a-Time nostalgically to life; and each makes us feel the potential nearness of little Eastern and little Western child.

LORNA LEWIS



# CHRISTMAS BOOK COUNTER

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As in previous years, we append here a rapid survey of new books, to suit all tastes and purses. First for our money among gift books would be Frank Smythe's *Rocky Mountains* (A. and C. Black, 30s.) The text is not as carefully written as one expects of this author, but the sixty-four plates of photographs, with some sixteen in colour, are magnificent, the account of how they came to be obtained never lacks interest, and one closes the book feeling that one has made the acquaintance of at least two more giants, Mt Robson and Mt Brussels. Peter Lunn's *Ski-ing Primer* (Methuen, 7s. 6d.) not only tells the beginner how to ski, but provides a history of the sport, and Mr Lunn's prose is more than able to convey some of the thrill of it. An excellent exercise for training the muscles before the start of the season is included. *Snow-White* (Jan Vlasak and Josef Segert; Hodge, 12s. 6d.) is not devoid of whimsy as a title, but the book itself is an entirely absorbing account of how for the first time a polar bear cub was reared by hand, in (of all places) a flat. It is illustrated with a complete set of photographs and an appendix gives scientific data of the first five months in the life of this enchanting animal. Set in the Faroes, a Danish novel, *Barbara*, (Jorgen-Frantz Jacobsen) makes its first appearance in English as a Penguin. The translation is by Edward Bannister. Mr. T. A. Layton is a restaurateur who in *Five to a Feast* (Duckworth, 12s. 6d.) gives an account, with digressions, of his (successful) attempt to recreate in these, our sadder, days, the banquet given by Sir Henry Picard to five kings in the reign of Edward III. Centuries later, the author gave it again—though without the kings—in the same place, which had been bombed. His account of the feast is the best part of the book, and disappointingly brief. The rest consists of wartime experiences in the Catering Corps, biographical portraits of his friends, historical reconstruction and fine writing, much of which is

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**DENT**

beside the point and often, as well, beyond his powers. But the medieval menu's a feast in itself\* \*\*\*A warm welcome should await *Bernard Shaw Through the Camera* (R. and H. White, 15s) Assembled by F. E. Loewenstein, it contains 238 photographs, many taken by Mr. Shaw. Others include the earliest (1874) extant picture of the subject, an 'action' one of him writing *Caesar and Cleopatra*, another of him rehearsing *Androcles and The Lion* with Lillah McCarthy, and one of Rodin at work on his bust. Highlights are probably Shaw's own photograph of Mrs Patrick Campbell at her house in Kensington Square and the remarkable 'still' showing Lord Howard de Walden, William Archer, Sir James Barrie, G. K. Chesterton, and Shaw as—cowboys in a discarded film by Barrie. A pleasing feature of the book is that though it affords abundant glimpses of celebrities—May Morris, Margaret MacMillan, Ellen Terry, Elgar—it gives a more continuous picture of Shaw's daily life at Ayot St. Lawrence, with his staff, the villagers and, including these, his friends. The book has indeed a happy atmosphere. Pictures of the subject's hands and a horoscope, together with a chronological list of works and reproductions of illustrations thereto increase the value of a novel and necessary volume\*\*\*\* *Words of War, Words of Peace* (Muller, 7s. 6d.) is a collection of essays by Eric Partridge in his familiar manner The titles give fair indication of the contents—'The Gentle Art of Abbreviation', 'Those Radio Catch-phrases,' 'Words Get Their Wings,' 'From Knapsack to Baton.' Mr. Partridge does not treat his chosen subject, words, with sufficient scholarship for my liking, but this book can be, like his others, recommended for pleasant light reading\*\*\*\*Christina Hole's *English Folk Heroes* (Batsford, 10s. 6d.) is also light, but it shouldn't be. She writes on a deep subject but is content to skim the surface. Her chapters on King Arthur ignore much recent finding; that on Robin Hood Plays and Places does not mention 'Looke About You' (1600); Whittington only has two pages, with no reference to the legend that he came from the North—as the episode on Highgate Hill would seem to suggest, since that is not the way to enter London from the West. The chapter on St George is scrappy, and does not take into

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*Translated by* GILBERT MURRAY, *with introduction and notes*. Though not part of a trilogy, this play has an obvious connection with the other two Sophoclean plays, *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone*, both of which have also been translated into English verse by Dr Murray. *5s net*

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sufficient account the work of Sir Wallis Budge in this field  
 \*\*\*\*J. C. Trewin's *The English Theatre* (Paul Elek, 6s.) suffers from the publishers having offset the author's masterly compression of text with an unmannerly condensation of type, badly inked and appallingly paragraphed. It has worthwhile illustrations, but I am tantalized at finding a highly readable text mainly unscannable.\*\*\**The Shakespeare Memorial Theatre*, by Ruth Ellis (Winchester, 15s.), is a history of the playhouse and of the festivals held in it at Stratford-on-Avon, of particular interest for the illustrations of past actors and for cast-lists from 1879-1948. That beautiful player, Dorothy Green, contributes a foreword, and it is pleasant to find in the text something approaching fitting tribute to her art (as well as to the workmanship of Robert Atkins).\*\*\*\*Mr. McQueen Pope's *Haymarket, Theatre of Perfection* (W. H. Allen, 17s. 6d.) suffers from being too expansive in manner. Everything is too perfect in this most perfect of theatres. A play, a production, is accorded more or less praise according as it fits in with what is 'echt Haymarket'. The author pats his playhouse on the back, so to speak, for putting on *Mary Rose* but seems unaware that any raps over the knuckles should be given it for turning down *You Never Can Tell*. It appears to escape him that one of the things the Haymarket stood for was what was once the peculiarly English virtue of the mediocre well-done. But as one of the few London theatres with a tradition, the Haymarket has our hearts and therefore this book, though not the history we hoped, has a place.\*\*\*\*\*The ideal theatrical history has been written by Cecil Price in *The English Theatre in Wales* (University of Wales Press, 10s. 6d.) This takes rank with the work of Richard Sothorn. It is a quite admirable account of strolling companies, of the spread of acting due to London monopolies, the fashion of spas, the improvements in travel. It is work of research, done with such skill that its erudition is most graciously alive and it both shines with great names, Siddons, of course, taking lead, and re-lights lesser ones.\*\*\*\*\*Another good book from the same land is *A Prospect of Wales*, with text of impeccable limpid English by Gwyn Jones and twenty colour plates by



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Kenneth Rowntree This is a King Penguin, and if there is any higher rank for that bird, this should have it\*\*\*\**Highland Dress* is a close runner-up in the same series. Text is by George E. Collie and there are 24 colour plates from R. R. MacIan's *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands*, put out by Ackermann from 1845-7\*\*\*\*Much more pretentious but far less evocative is *Vision of Scotland* by G. S. Fraser (Paul Elek, 25s.) It is written in a breathless, undisciplined English of which this is a sample: 'Yet it is the East Coast (on which—though Galloway, in the West, is also a fertile region—on the whole the best and most abundant arable land lies) that is bleak and bracing, while the West, even where, as in the Highlands, the soil is wretched and boggy, has a climate that is mild, damp, and relaxing.'\*\*\*\*Books of this kind are best written by James Bone and his latest is a fitting companion to his *Perambulators*. Three things make Mr. Bone the ideal author on London; his knowledge, his style and the fact that his brother is on hand to provide illustrations. In *London Echoing* (Cape, 18s.) these elements meet in happy conjunction. \*\*\*\*Among additions to the Faber Gallery (7s. 6d.) may be noted *Renouir*, introduced by R. H. Wilenski, and *Homage to Venus*, introduced by James Laver. This latter contains ten plates, in good colour, of artists' interpretations of the Goddess (of one aspect) of Love, from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, from Sellaio to Steer. Mr. Laver's wit is apt to be a little 'smart'—need we really be told that Boucher's dolphin 'supplies jet-propulsion'?—but he is invariably wise, as witness, 'she has no need of shield or crown or sceptre. The symbol of her empire is herself alone.' But most attractive of all I find are the Chagall, Matisse, and Van Gogh, introduced by Michael Ayrton, Jean Cassou, and Philip James respectively \*\*\*\**Man Proposes* (Methuen, 12s. 6d.) is a safe but exciting choice for a bed- or sofa-side book. It is an anthology of proposals of marriage collected by Agnes Furlong. It is a pity that Florizel did not, perhaps, in so many words 'propose' to Perdita, and one would have liked Othello's speech to the Doges. Otherwise, almost all one can think of is here—from *Jane Eyre*, *Little Dorritt*, to *The Importance of Being Earnest*; from Malfi to Millament. There are passages from

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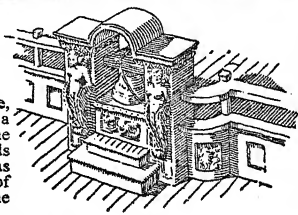


Shaw and Synge; from four plays by Shakespeare; from Tennyson, Turgenev, and Tolstoy; and I liked particularly the statement sent to a Marriage Bureau: 'The lady who would care to write to me with a view to Matrimony in the Near Future must be willing to live on Public Assistance.'\*\*\*\* These books for readers; let us include now one of special interest to writers—Benham's *Book of Quotations*, of which Harraps have put out a new edition at twenty-five shillings. A supplement brings it up to date, and there is the enduring tantalizing appeal of wondering why such-and-such was included, and that not, the same comparing representation (Pope, twelve and a half pages, Wells, three and a half). My quarrel has always been that Cromwell had three-quarters of a page and Wellington only six entries—he has four more in the supplement—but as ever of equal interest to the quotations themselves are the notes on their provenance.

*The Pocket World Bible*, edited by Robert O. Ballou (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 7s. 6d.), presents, in translation, the fundamental tenets of the basic religions of the world. There are 565 pages and the book is admirably printed and produced \*\*\*\* *The Splendid Hills* (Phoenix, 35s.), by Ronald Clark, tells the life-story of Vittorio Sella (1859-1913), the pioneer and many think the greatest of all mountain-photographers. Eighty pages of plates provide a thrilling experience as well as form a noble tribute to the memory of this astonishing man. I am glad to be able to announce that in the New Year we shall be printing a chapter from another book by Ronald Clark, who has written a history of early Alpine guides.\*\*\*\* I did not think any element of surprise remained in books about ballet, but both plates and introduction of Mr. Sacheverell Sitwell's *The Romantic Ballet* (Batsford, 6s. 6d.) delight by their delicacy. Mr. Sitwell has achieved the feat of persuading one that no one else has written of Romantic ballet; he enables us to see it as if for the first time. When there is, as I often hope, a moratorium against writers on ballet, Mr. Sitwell must be exempt. This volume is the first of a series of Batsford Colour Books, of which others are *Garden Flowers*, containing 16 plates from Mrs. Jane Loudon's volumes and a well- if trifle over-mannered essay on flower-illustration by Robert

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Gathorne-Hardy, and *Tropical Birds*, in which plates from John Goulds *Birds of New Guinea and the adjacent Papuan Islands* are introduced again by Sacheverell Sitwell in such a way that one wonders whether, after all, he should ever write of anything but birds\*\*\*His *Selected Poems* (Duckworth, 8s 6d.) are again available, with a discerning preface by Sir Osbert\*\*\*\**From Santos to Bahia* is by the Dane, Hakon Mielche, whose *Land of the Condor* gave occasion for much pleasure last Christmas. Having been in the New World myself since then, I hope it may be taken as some measure of his charm when I say that this latest book is even more of a delight\*\*\*\*Eminently desirable for anyone remotely interested in genius is *Edward Gordon Craig* (King Penguin), with a satisfactory account of this artist's work by Janet Leeper, a chronology, and forty plates of designs \*\*\*The lighter side of the theatre is excellently represented by a reprint of Maud Gill's *See the Players* (George Ronald, Birmingham, 12s. 6d.). The author was the unforgettable 'Thirza Tapper', of *The Farmer's Wife*, and apart from her zest, warmth, and pretty wit, the book is of particular interest for its account of touring and 'fit-up' companies\*\*\*\*Two King Penguins which seem to me less satisfactory than usual are *British Military Uniforms* and *Compliments of the Season*. Though James Laver, in the former, wins respect by his reference to puttees as an 'imbecile aberration', he loses it by omitting from his two dozen plates any representation of the British Grenadier—and to make matters worse, includes a Coldstream Guardsman! The second book, which is a short history of the Christmas card, suffers from an excessive German bias and over-disparagement of the subject; there is a sameness about the plates, and less vulgar ones than here included are to be found. The authors limit their period from the first card of one hundred years ago to 1895. This prevents inclusion of illustrations of such modern cards as those of the Caseg or Golden Cockerel Press, but it should have enabled some reference to have been made to the much more balanced special Christmas Card number of the *Studio* in 1894. Sixteen plates seems a poor allowance in a book on this subject, and an essay of thirty-seven pages too lavish.\*\*\*\*Penguin also provide, as a Puffin Cut-Out Book (2s. 6d.)

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a toy theatre, with instructions for making, and three plays, *The Fox and Hens*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Cinderella*, written and designed by Jane Cummings; at the same price, scenes and figures from the film of *Hamlet* are adjusted in size to fit Pollock's Miniature Theatres. The scenes are in black and-white, the figures coloured. There is a Graveyard, but neither bier, priest, nor mourners are given. Of the twenty-two figures, six show Sir Laurence Olivier (one trailing a red cloak, one in blue red-sleeved doublet). I cannot see why anyone should wish to mount as a play a film in the first place so badly adapted from the play, but of that, as of the picture, the less said the better\*\*\*\**The Cook's Paradise* (Sylvan Press, 7s. 6d.) disguises, rather more than it should, a collection of the recipes of William Verral, master of the White Horse Inn at Lewes, Sussex. These were originally published in 1759 as Verral's *Complete System of Cookery*. A copy owned by the poet Thomas Gray still exists and this new edition includes six closely written pages of his notes, reproduced in printed transcription. Verral himself not only cooked with a nice discrimination but wrote with a pretty wit. Many of his receipts are eminently practicable to-day and it is to be noticed how much nearer to our own taste he was than the grosser feeders of that lamentable century which followed his.

# LIFE AND LETTERS

MID **1/6** MONTH

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